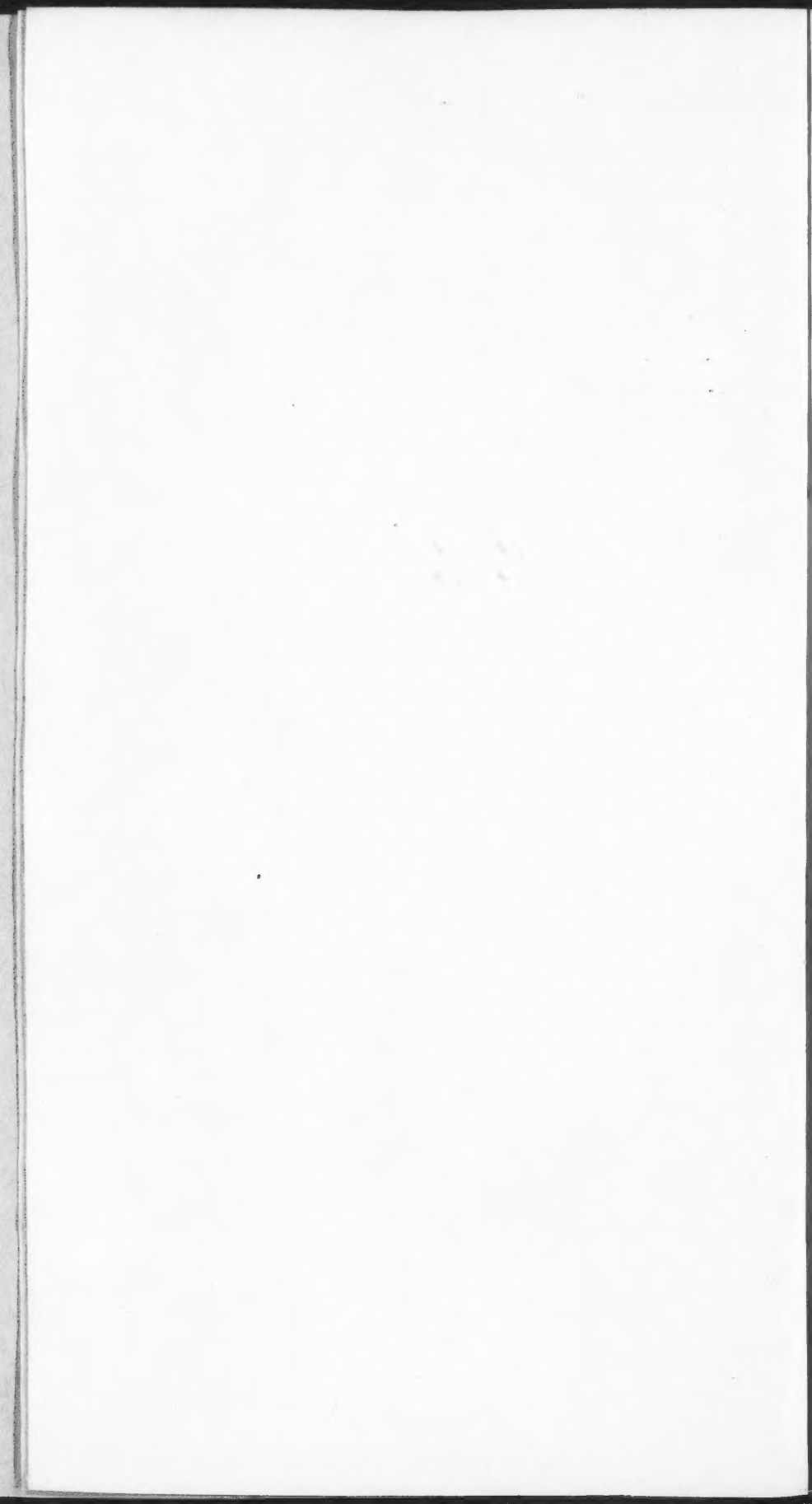


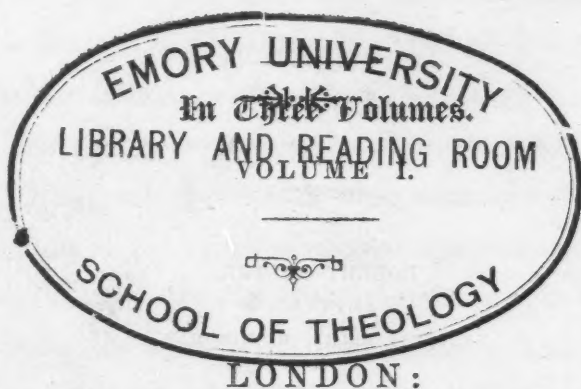
VOLUME 1



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THE
WORKS,
PUBLISHED AND POSTHUMOUS,
OF
THE REV. DANIEL ISAAC.

BY JOHN BURDSALL.



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PREFACE.

CONSIDERING the productions that are continually issuing from the British press, it is very surprising that between six and seven years should have been allowed to pass away without any particular call either from his brethren, the Wesleyan Ministers, or his lay friends of that community, for a new and complete edition of the Rev. Daniel Isaac's Works. Had he been a man of but ordinary talents, or one whose talents were but little known; or had the productions of his pen been of a light and ephemeral character, or of so abstruse and mystical a nature, as to require more labour in fathoming them, than the profit of their perusal would repay; or had they at the time of their publication been looked upon as obtrusive and inutile; then there had been a sufficient and very proper reason for the silence of the Wesleyans and others respecting these works. But that the writings of Daniel Isaac should have been consigned either to

total or comparative neglect; a man whose works, though seldom polished, and sometimes coarse, are always sensible, generally sound, pointed, original, and weighty; possessing the rare quality of taking the reader by the shortest course to the author's object; that writings of this sort, whatever be their theme, should neither be read nor sought after, augurs but ill for the taste and employment of the present day. But that they, occupied as they are in the discussion of some of the most important topics in the whole compass of christian theology, should remain uncalled for, is to the writer of this article a fact that is perfectly astounding. But to whatever cause the fact may be attributed beside, the writer will venture to affirm, that it cannot justly be ascribed to the want of freshness in the author's method of pursuing his argument, to the looseness of his reasonings in support of his general theme, or to the inconclusive bearing of his works upon their separate objects. So fully is the writer convinced of this, that he scruples not to hazard what little reputation he possesses in affirming, that there are but few works upon the same subjects, very few indeed, which either surpass or equal them in perspicuity, originality, and power.

The writer cannot pledge himself for the correctness of every sentiment set forth in these works, or for the propriety of every expression used by the author; for on several points included in the subjects that are discussed, the author and himself thought very differently, as the notes appended to the works by the editor will show; but with the exception of two or three instances, in which he knew it to have been the author's intention, had he lived, to give a new edition of his works to the public, to have made some verbal alterations, he has uniformly given the author's sentiments in his own language. And if in any case the editor thought it necessary to guard his readers against anything that is advanced by the author, of a more dubious and less justifiable nature, he has always done it in a note, with the word editor affixed to it. This liberty he claimed, or he could not conscientiously have undertaken the task of re-editing these works, dearly as he loved their author, and highly as he thought of his judgment and theology.

The several essays which are now for the first time offered to the public, as they had not the benefit of the author's last corrections, they cannot be expected to

appear to that advantage which his published works do; yet, in their present state, they will not fail to filiate themselves, and will reflect but little, if any more discredit on the mind, the heart, and the principles, of their author, than those which he himself published.

His work on the atonement will appear to the greatest disadvantage, owing, not to any defect in the matter itself, but to the incomplete form in which the work was left. The author seems to have been unsettled in his mind, whether to publish it in the form of a correspondence, or in a series of consecutive essays; and while he was in this state of oscillation on the subject, his last affliction occurred, which rendered him utterly incapable of putting a finishing hand to it. But with this exception to the form in which it was left, and to the circumstance that the author did not live to complete his work, the writer considers this as one of his best and most important works.

As to his entire sermons, they are now presented to the public just as he himself had published them. But with regard to his outlines, or sketches of sermons, though they bear the strong impress of his master

mind, yet would they have been wholly unfit to meet the public eye, and useless to the generality of his readers, had not the editor taken the liberty of inserting appropriate introductory remarks, and connecting links to all of them. Such prefatory and connecting matter, Mr. Isaac always had in his own mind, and therefore would neither waste his time in writing at large his pulpit exercises, and then in committing to memory what he had written, as is the case with but too many of our popular ministers; nor yet would he dare by such a mode of proceeding to shut out the aids of God's Holy Spirit from his pulpit labours, through a rigid adherence to what he had thus committed to paper and to memory. He sought to approve himself to his divine Master, by endeavouring to win and edify the souls of men, rather than to gain the plaudits of his hearers for the music of his periods and the brilliancy of his compositions. Hence his outlines were little more than so many strings of catch-words, intended as hints to the memory, which should leave the mind at liberty to follow the inspiration of his theme, and to pour forth the riches of his conceptions and feelings under the unction of the Holy One.

With these explanations and remarks, the editor presents the first volume of these works to the public, not without fear, lest, by any means, however unintentionally, the character of Mr. Isaac, or the useful tendency of his works, should suffer in passing through his hands ; and most gladly would he have committed this work to some one more competent to it than himself, had he been permitted to do so ; but this not being allowed, all that he can say is, that hitherto he has done his very best to secure the pleasure and profit of the reader, and the credit and benevolent purpose of his author.

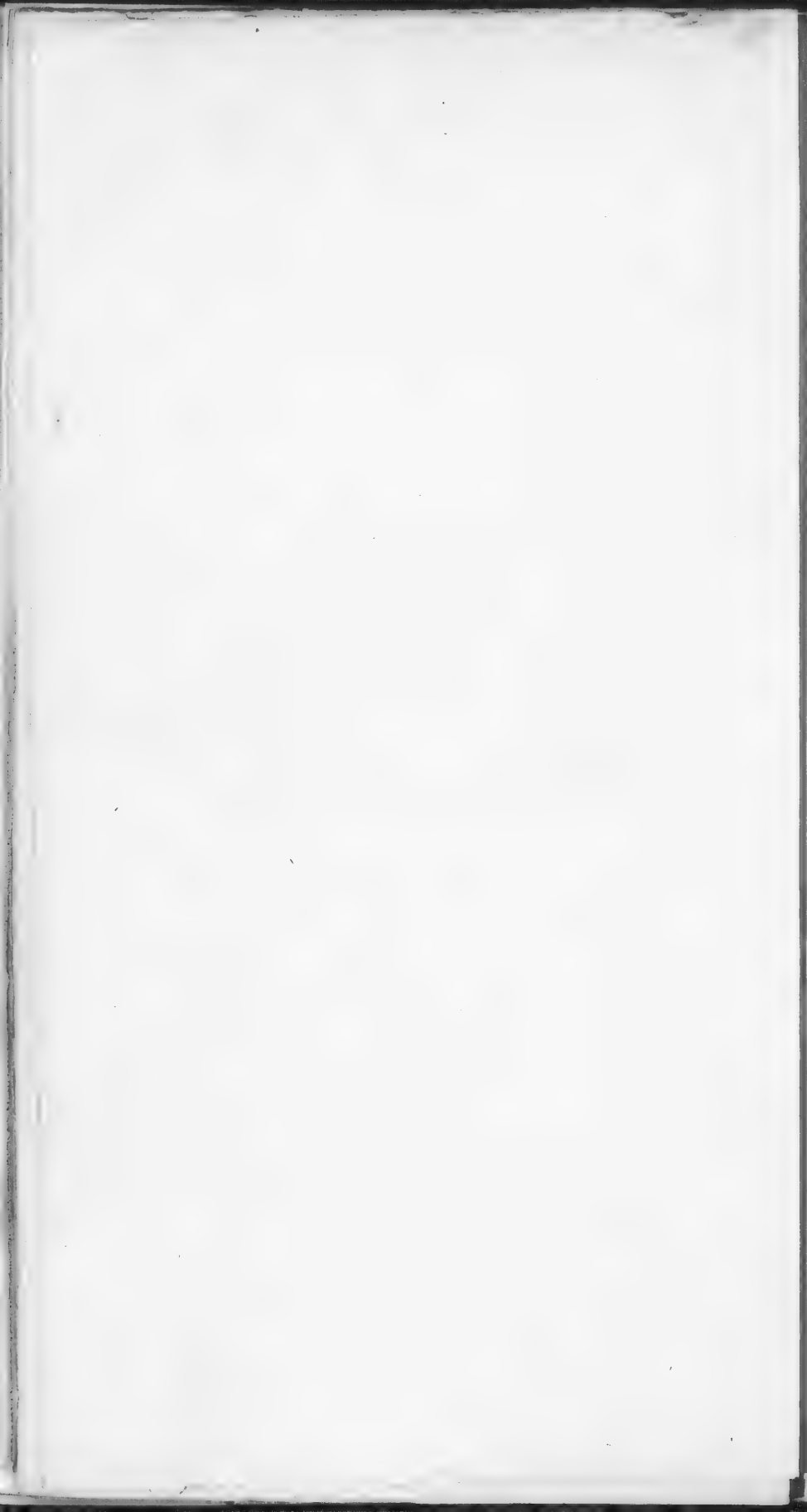
JOHN BURDSALL.

YORK, *June 25, 1840.*

N.B. Should the sketches of sermons give general satisfaction, and more of a similar kind be desired, an intimation to that effect from the mass of the purchasers of the works, by letters (post-paid) to either the printer or the editor, will be attended to as far as it shall be practicable.

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**ECCLESIASTICAL CLAIMS
INVESTIGATED.**



PREFACE.

THE Author turned his attention to the subjects discussed in the following Essays soon after the failure of Lord Sidmouth's Bill. He had hoped, from the signal defeat which bigotry and intolerance suffered on that memorable occasion, that religious liberty would not have been soon again assailed; how great then was his surprise to find, that, almost immediately, a new interpretation was given to the Act of Toleration, which reduced it nearly to a cipher. The most singular circumstance was, that every court of quarter sessions in the kingdom, with one or two exceptions, viewed the act in a new light all at once; in consequence of which, all applications for licenses, upon the old terms, were rejected. It appeared very wonderful, that the new interpretation, if the true one, should have eluded the sagacity of magistrates and lawyers for one hundred and twenty years; and that, after the lapse of so long a period, they should be instantaneously illuminated with the knowledge of the truth, as if by immediate inspiration. But this mystery was explained, when it transpired that a circular had been sent to every court of quarter sessions, instructing the justices in the new doctrines. Compare this underhand work with public professions about liberality, the rights of conscience, etc., and some illustrious characters will be illustrated. It was about the same time too, that our places of worship were taxed,—a sacrilege never before practised in the world, by Heathens, Jews, or Mahometans.

These various attempts at persecution, filled the Author with indignation, and gave birth to the present work. Some people will perhaps think, that the new Toleration Act has rendered this little book unnecessary; the writer, however, is of a different opinion, and will proceed to detail his reasons for it.

Acts of Parliament are of very little consequence, if not supported by public opinion. When the sense of the nation is opposed to them, they will soon grow obsolete, or be repealed. This remark applies particularly to the Act in question, because it is framed solely on the professed principle of expediency. The preamble states, "Whereas it is expedient," etc. But should the public opinion on the subject of religious liberty change, this expediency will no longer exist; it may then be judged expedient to repeal the Act of Toleration, and revive the Act of Uniformity.

It is remarkable, that though the opinions of senators, lawyers, and divines, may be cited in abundance in favour of religious liberty, yet there is no assertion of the rights of conscience, either in the old or in the new Act of Toleration. They both go on the ground of expediency. At the time the old Act was passed, William and Mary were not very firmly seated on the throne. The Catholics were powerful, and it was thought that the Nonconformists might have united with them, and have overturned the infant government, had the old persecuting measures been pursued; it was therefore judged expedient, "to grant some ease to scrupulous consciences." In the next reign it was deemed expedient to resume the glorious work of persecution; and the Schism Bill was passed, which took the children of dissenters from their parents, and put them under the care of Churchmen, that they might be educated in the principles of the Establishment. A more inhuman act than this, the ingenuity of cruelty could not perhaps devise; but Heaven in judgment took

away the Priest-ridden Queen, the very day this iniquitous Act was to have taken place.

How long the present expediency will exist, it is impossible to say. One thing, however, is certain, that so long as the laws do not recognise the rights of conscience, we have no security for the permanency of our religious liberties, but in the public opinion. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to support and perpetuate those liberal sentiments, which have been so long, and so generally entertained in this nation.

It is the more necessary to call the attention of the public to the subjects discussed in the following pages, on account of the uncommon pains which have been taken of late years, to revive a spirit of bigotry and intolerance. The secret history of Lord Sidmouth's Bill would be a most curious document. A part of it was published in the Literary Panorama for July, 1811: "It consists with our knowledge, that towards ten years ago, at a meeting of three, or four, or more, of the reverend the bishops, (whether held for the purpose, we do not recollect,) the subject of sectaries and their increase engaged the conversation. We believe that *minutes* of their lordships' opinions, or suggestions, were *recorded*. This bill, though called Lord Sidmouth's, we hazard little in affirming, is not his Lordship's composition. The skeleton of it, we presume, may be dated eight or ten years ago; and the finishing of it is, by conjecture, ascribed to a prelate, whose Grammar and Greek have lately received rough usage from sectarian commentators." When it is considered that Lord Sidmouth's Bill, had it passed, would have nearly annihilated our religious liberties, this conduct of the bishops looks very much like a conspiracy against them.

But how happened it that eight or ten years elapsed before the bill was brought into parliament? To this

question we are not furnished with an answer. The following fact, however, is deserving of notice. Previous to the formation of this plot, it was only occasionally that a book was printed, or a sermon preached, against the sectaries; but ever since, both the press and the pulpit have been constantly bewailing the miseries of Methodism and the dangers of the Church. The alarm which has been sounding so long in Zion, has, at last, terrified some weak minds. By perpetually hearing frightful stories, some people are filled with dread. Tell a child about hobgoblins, and it will soon imagine it sees them: If you want to drive a man mad, confine him among madmen.

The conduct of high Churchmen for some years past, has had very much the appearance of a systematic plan, to render all classes of dissenters odious to the nation, and to prepare the way for an abridgment of their religious privileges. In numbers of pulpits the many-headed monster, Methodism, which comprises all the sectaries, has been manfully encountered by the doughty champions of the Church; but though it has been roughly handled, and often triumphed over as an expiring foe, yet, like the beast in the Revelation, its deadly wound has healed again, its enemies have been dismayed, and the ominous cry has rung through the country, "Its progress must be stopped! Something must be done! The Church is in danger!" Prelates have made many a furious charge at it; pamphleteers have been employed to pelt it with dirt, and to make it look hideous and frightful; and nearly the whole corps of reviewers have been pressed into the service of our aged and venerable mother, to protect her from injury, and to excite public indignation against the terrible enemy which threatens her destruction.

Though innumerable visitation sermons, pamphlets, and books have been published against Methodism, within the period alluded to, yet the dissenters have

seldom written a line in defence of their opinions, practices, and liberties. They were ignorant of the Episcopal plot; and the works of their adversaries were either contemptible for their ignorance and dullness, or, ridiculous for their impotent malice and absurdity. Take a specimen: A "Christian Advocate" at Cambridge wrote against the Methodists, and was incautious enough to confess, that he did not understand their principles. Another divine endeavoured to awaken the sensibility, and to rouse to action the torpid powers of the Archbishop of Canterbury, by predicting his Grace's martyrdom, if something were not speedily done to check the progress of fanaticism. And a canting fellow, from a learned criticism on Ephes. vi. 11, shrewdly insinuated that the devil is a Methodist, and the father of the sect, and loudly called upon his clerical brethren to "put on the whole armour of God, that they might be able to stand against the Methodism of the devil."

From such representations as these, many people, who can swallow anything spoken by a priest, find it difficult to believe that these arch-heretics belong to the human species. A friend of the author's was some years ago at an inn in Stamford, where the company were conversing about the Methodists. While some were describing the extravagances of the sect, he observed one man to listen to the discourse with apparent astonishment. His curiosity was at last excited to such a pitch, that he could hold in no longer, but inquired with great eagerness, "Pray what sort of things are they? for I do not know that I ever saw one of them in my life!" The reader may judge of his surprise, when he learned that these monstrous things were two legged animals like himself.

Though so much pains had been taken to prepare the public mind for it, it was still a nice and critical affair to introduce a bill into Parliament. For after all that had been said about the enthusiasm, fanati-

cism, heresy, schism, and Jacobinism of the sects ; after all the dreadful alarms that they had polluted the altar, and endangered the throne ; after all the vehement demands, that, like troublesome " vermin, they must all be caught, killed, and cracked," or the Archbishop and his tribe would be martyred ; after all the mighty pother from books and sermons, from newspapers, magazines, and reviews ;—it was still doubtful whether any measure of restriction would be carried. The subject was announced with the utmost caution ; the Act of Toleration and dissenting ministers were panegyrised ; and nothing more was intended than to promote the respectability of the dissenting body, by laying under restraint a few hot-headed ignoramuses, who would not submit to the regulations of any religious community. Generous-hearted souls !

The next difficulty was to find a suitable time for introducing the bill into the house. Two things stood in the way, or it would have been brought forward at an earlier period : First. The king was known to be averse to it. Secondly. Our public men had so much political business upon their hands, that they had no time, even had they been disposed, to turn their attention to Methodism. At length the auspicious moment arrived. His Majesty was just laid aside through indisposition ; and the Prince, though his acquiescence was doubted, had not been tried. Our affairs abroad, which for a long time had worn an aspect gloomy as Methodism, had recently taken a favourable turn. The enemy had been beaten, and the national exultation on the occasion was raised to the highest pitch.

A visionary could not have dreamed that an intoxicated people, singing with enthusiasm the song of victory, would be sober time enough to perceive all the bearings of the bill, and be capable of sufficient sympathy with the meditated victims of intolerance, to

unite with them in crushing the demon of persecution at its birth.

But the greatest difficulty was to quiet the apprehensions of the dissenters. This required the most dextrous management. When so many writers had charged them with disaffection, and called so loudly and peremptorily on the government for some act of coercion or restriction; and when it was so well known that some periodical publications were devoted to the work of vilifying their character, and holding them up to the public as suspicious and dangerous persons, it is truly astonishing, that any of them could be deceived. To prevent alarm, however, the bill was introduced by a layman. His Lordship honoured the principal dissenting ministers with several interviews, bowed and scraped, and was all politeness. He assured them that he revered the rights of conscience, and the Act of Toleration which secured them; that nothing was further from his intention than to abridge their religious privileges, etc., etc. Many were lulled to sleep; but the utmost address was insufficient to remove the jealousy and allay the fears of a few timorous souls. When the bill was published, all delusion instantly vanished; and the dupes of artifice, by their subsequent zeal, made ample atonement for their past credulity.

Many have accused the framers of this bill of ignorance; but this is unjust. However deficient it may be in the harmlessness of the dove, it certainly contains a pretty large portion of the wisdom of the serpent. But its pernicious influence on the interests of the dissenters is now so well known, that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it here.

One object of the bill, according to the Archbishop of Canterbury, was, "To secure a more respectable description of teachers to the dissenters than they have at present." The dissenters must be under infinite

obligations to the bishops for their benevolent intentions and indefatigable exertions. Shameful ingrates! that the thanks of the body have not been returned to their Lordships. The reader will take it for granted, as a matter of course, that no ignorant or immoral ministers are to be found in the Establishment, or these Episcopal gentlemen would lie open to the imputation of being more concerned for the respectability of the Conventicle than the Church. The clergy are all grown as meagre and squalid as Pharaoh's lean kine, by mortifying the flesh with watchings and fastings, prayers and penances. They are never seen at balls, assemblies, or theatres, dancing attendance on the ladies; nor hunting, shooting, racing, or drinking with *bons vivants*. It is much to be regretted, therefore, that dissenting ministers, who are notoriously guilty of these practices, and are scarcely ever to be found in their studies, should so obstinately resist this laudable attempt to reform them, by their wise, pious, and virtuous neighbours.

The most puzzling part of his Grace's speech is, where he disclaims the character of a prophet, and yet predicts a period when the Church of England shall be no more. How is this? Is it necessary, in order to prolong her existence, that the Act of Toleration should be better explained, and dissenting teachers improved?—An actor spoils all, when he loses his mask!

When the fate of the bill was perceived, all parties were ready to disown it; like a company of unlucky boys, detected in a mischievous action, every one eagerly cried out, "It was not me!" The Archbishop of Canterbury "was sure, that so long as the Church of England should endure, she would not disturb the dissenters." But if his Grace be really a warm advocate for religious liberty, and be quite sure that the Church of England is grown as harmless and innocent as a lamb, how happened it that neither him-

self, nor any of his right reverend brethren, uttered a single word upon these subjects, till they saw the bill was lost? When this ugly brat, which was begotten, nursed, and brought up, by the bishops, appeared in public, the dissenters seized and strangled it; and its unnatural parents, when they saw that all attempts to save its life were fruitless, confessed that it ought to die.

All the inferior clergy have cause to dread the suppression of Methodism. Preaching against the sectaries has for some years been the high road to preferment. A young man who wishes to better his situation, has only to obtain an appointment to preach before his superiors, and to improve the opportunity by a violent philippic against the dissenters, and he is sure to gain his object. How many now enjoy fat benefices and bishoprics as the reward of their zeal against the enemies of our apostolic Establishment! No other qualifications are necessary to rise to distinction, than an acquaintance with a few cant phrases, and a good pair of lungs. For instance: To compose an excellent visitation sermon, take a few rattling words for your materials, such as schismatics, atheists, rebels, traitors, miscreants, monsters, fanatics, enthusiasts, hypocrites, apostolic Church, excellent Establishment, holy priesthood, sacred order, pious clergy, impiety, blasphemy, damnation: "Stir these together in a warm head, and, after a very little shaking, bring them out, scum and all; distribute them into several periods, and your work is done."* Take this precious composition into the pulpit, bellow away with all your might before patrons, doctors, and bishops, and you have made your fortune.

It is a matter of vast importance, that the dissenters keep united. The late attack was upon the whole body; when this was perceived, all parties joined and

* Bradbury.

defeated it at a single stroke. Should another attempt be made, it will most probably be made against a single sect, in the hope that the other sects will look on as uninterested spectators. But if the wolf of persecution be permitted to tear a single sheep, it is foolish to talk of the rest of the flock being in safety: he will not leave the fold while one remains alive. First divide and then destroy, has always been the policy of the prince of darkness; and he has generally taken his measures with so much caution and secrecy, that his object has not been perceived, till it was too late to defeat it. But after the late conspiracy against our religious liberties has been detected, exposed, and crushed, if one party can be lulled to sleep while another is robbed of its most valuable privileges, and thus, in succession, the ruin of all denominations be effected; posterity, instead of pitying their fate, will contemplate with holy indignation, that criminal indifference to each other's interests by which it was merited. The recently formed society for the protection of our religious liberties, is a laudable and necessary institution; it ought to be, and it is hoped it will be, joined by every religious community, that the influence of all may be exerted in the defence of each, and then our privileges will be preserved inviolate.

Those who wish to stop the progress of Methodism by restriction, or coercion, ought to know, from the experience of all ages, that persecution has never weakened a sect, but when it has been conducted upon the broad principle of extermination, and not always, even then. During the three first centuries, the bush grew and flourished in the fire. After all the sufferings of the Puritans, under Elizabeth and the two succeeding princes, instead of their being suppressed or diminished, it turned out that more than half the nation had embraced their religious system. And though the Nonconformists were treated with greater rigour than the Puritans, their interest gained ground daily, and was sufficiently strong at the revolution, to

turn the scale on the side of liberty. In a word, persecution will defeat its own end; if it do not, to use a common and vulgar expression, hang them all up together; but those who are for using this summary method of extirpating heresy, ought to reflect, that Haman swung upon the gallows which he had erected for Mordecai.

The dissenters have hitherto prided themselves upon their loyalty and patriotism; and it is astonishing how few of them, in comparison of Churchmen, have been convicted of disaffection to the government, or of any crimes against the peace and good order of society; yet they have often been charged with conspiring against both Church and state. All this abuse has been patiently borne, under a persuasion that our pious, venerable, and much esteemed Sovereign knew the contrary, and did not love them the less on account of their nonconformity. His olfactory nerves were not so delicate as to smell Jacobinism in every creed which differed from his own. His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, it is believed, entertains the liberal and enlightened sentiments of his august Father; and while he exercises the royal authority in the equal protection of all classes of his subjects, in the free enjoyment of their civil and religious rights, he will not find the dissenters behind the most bigoted Churchmen, in affection to his person, and zeal for his government. But were the abominable lies of a set of incendiaries to obtain credit, and were an abridgment of our religious liberties to be the consequence, they would, most probably, cause the very evil of which they so loudly complain; for it is no easy matter for a man to retain his loyalty when it is tried by a prison, a pillory, or a halter.

The practice of persecution by any church, is a serious objection to its title as apostolical. Chrysostom has a pertinent remark upon this subject: "Does the sheep," says he, "ever persecute the wolf? No, but

the wolf the sheep. So Cain persecuted Abel, not Abel Cain ; so Ishmael persecuted Isaac, not Isaac Ishmael ; so the Jews Christ, not Christ the Jews ; so heretics the Christians, not Christians heretics."* Dr. Jortin observes, that "to banish, imprison, plunder, starve, hang, and burn men for religion, is not the Gospel of Christ ; it is the gospel of the devil. Where persecution begins, Christianity ends. Christ never used anything that looked like force or violence, except once ; and that was to drive bad men out of the temple, and not to drive them in."†

The following pages are not committed to the press with a view to serve the interests of any one denomination of Christians in particular, but to defend the practice of dissenting ministers and churches in general. Though the author has not replied to any single work which has appeared on the other side of the question, he presumes to think, that he has more than answered fifty publications in support of bigotry and intolerance.

And what is this D. Isaac, who volunteers his services in behalf of the whole body of dissenters ? The Author has no wish to draw public attention from the book to himself ; but as he is aware that readers are usually inquisitive after authors ; and that, consequently, it will soon be known beyond the sphere of his acquaintance to what sect he belongs ; he will anticipate all inquiries by an open avowal, because it will furnish him with an opportunity of explaining a point which otherwise might lead some people into mistake. Know then, that this D. Isaac, is an itinerant preacher in the Wesleyan connexion. "A Methodist preacher !" exclaims one ; and another, "Why we always thought that Methodists were staunch Churchmen ;" This is the point to be explained. A peculiar excellence

* Quoted by Jewel, Apol. p. 543.

† Jortin's Sermon on Persecution.

in the constitution of Methodism is this : People are not required to withdraw from other religious communities when they become members of the Methodist societies : A Churchman may remain a Churchman still, and a Dissenter a Dissenter still. Mr. Wesley was a Churchman. Nine-tenths of those who joined his societies had made no previous profession of religion at all. He advised them to go to church ; and most of them complied. As the greater part of his people thus became Churchmen, the preachers, who were selected from among them, were generally well affected towards the Establishment, and exhorted their hearers to attend the ministry of the regular clergy.

This was the state of things for some time. In point of fact, the greater part of both preachers and people were Churchmen ; but this was owing to the circumstances stated above, and not to any law of the connexion requiring the members to profess Churchism : Liberty was all along allowed ; and a few from the first dissented from the Establishment.

It is also a fact, that of late years, many of the Methodists have become Dissenters ; and it is doubtful with the Author, whether it be proper now to designate them generally as Churchmen. The principal cause of this increasing secession from the church is to be found in the conduct of the clergy. They have preached away so lustily against Methodism, that though the people crouched and fawned for some time, like spaniels under the lash, they were obliged at last to take to their heels and run away.

The author is a Dissenter in principle. He is sensible, however, that many sentiments contained in his book, have no place in the creed of a respectable number of his brethren ; and as some of them have written him on the subject, and expostulated with him on the impropriety of publishing opinions which are not gene-

rally held by the religious body to which he belongs, under an idea that the public might impute his peculiar notions to all the preachers, and thus include them in the censure, if censure be incurred, which is due only to himself; he wishes it to be distinctly understood, that in publishing this piece, he is not the organ of his brethren in the ministry, and that the praise or blame which may be awarded, belongs to himself alone.

If it should be objected that the liberty contended for in the following pages is not enjoyed by the Methodist societies, the author thinks the objector is mistaken. The present members were perfectly at liberty in joining the societies; and they have the same liberty to withdraw, whenever they think proper. They are the guardians of orthodoxy; for if they are of opinion that their ministers preach false doctrines, live wicked lives, or neglect discipline, they have a power of dismissing them. With respect to the choice of ministers, the members prefer the itinerant plan, as they find it more edifying to have a succession of preachers, than to be restricted to the labours of an individual for life. Upon this plan it is impossible for the people to have a liberty of choice as to particular preachers, because two or more societies might wish to have the same man; they therefore choose to receive such as are appointed by Conference, rather than be confined to a single stated minister.

The liberty pleaded for in these sheets is not a liberty in behalf of individuals to infringe upon the rights of societies. Every member of a society ought to conform to its regulations, or quietly withdraw. Imposition is more hateful in individuals than in communities, as it is more unreasonable for a hundred to yield to one, than for one to yield to a hundred. This is so generally admitted, that factious persons

seldom forget to plead, that they are acting in behalf of the people, and that their wishes are the wishes of the people.*

When it is asserted, that every man has a right to be of what religion he pleases, it is not meant that he has this right independent of God, but merely independent of his fellow creatures. Every man is responsible to God, and is obliged in conscience to be guided by his word in religious matters. If he takes up with a false religion, he will have to suffer the consequences of it in another world; but that is surely enough, without his being subjected to pains and penalties in this. He does not sin against man, by adopting an erroneous creed, and worshiping with ridiculous rites and ceremonies; but he sins against his Maker, and ought to be left to the judgment of God.

The strictures on the clergy in this little book are not intended to apply to the moderate party; for with some of them the author is acquainted, and the whole of them he highly respects; but to the high-flyers, who are for driving to the devil in a chariot of fire, all who refuse subjection to their spiritual

* A few turbulent spirits, some years ago, agitated the Methodist societies. The burden of their song was, that the preachers were tyrants, and the people suffering the most grievous oppressions; that nothing could save the connexion but a new constitution, founded upon, what they termed, more liberal principles, etc. The preachers, conscious of their own integrity, and of the attachment of the members in general to the old plan, refused to concede what was so peremptorily demanded. The friends of the people, as they styled themselves, separated, formed their new constitution, and invited the people to enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It turned out that about one in eighteen joined the new connexion; so that one was the people, and the other seventeen were nothing at all! History furnishes innumerable examples of this kind. The one had a right to withdraw if he felt dissatisfied, but he had no right to attempt the imposition of his new yoke upon the necks of his brethren.

authority. Some readers will perhaps blame the author for not writing with perfect calmness and gravity. The fact is, he has a great dislike to writing controversy; and as the subject was unpleasant, it may possibly have had an unhappy influence upon his temper. In walking through a village his pleasing meditations on rural scenery have sometimes been interrupted by the barking of little insignificant curs; and while the noisy animals have kept at a respectful distance, he has walked on, regardless of their anger; but when they have grown bolder, and have attempted to bite, he has felt indignant and kicked them away. Bigots have been long barking, and he took no notice of them; but as of late, they have attempted to bite, it became necessary to chastise their folly; but it was neither easy, nor necessary to do this with much sweetness of temper. Persecution is a furious, impudent fiend, which cannot be driven away with a few fine, soft words. The language of these sheets, however, is courtly, when compared with the anti-methodistical publications of the day. Till the enemies of the sectaries learn better manners, they must submit to a little rough usage: "A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back."

Since these sheets were ready for the press, the author has seen a well written pamphlet by Mr. Hare, on "The exclusive claims of Episcopal Ordination examined and rejected." As the subjects discussed in both works are in some particulars the same, the reader will not be surprised to find that both writers have, in some instances, employed the same arguments. The points of resemblance, however, are not very numerous; and where the arguments happen to be the same, they are set in different lights; the author, therefore, did not deem it necessary to make

any alterations. He has several quotations from the Homilies, and one from Dr. Doddridge, which adorn Mr. H.'s pages; but these are so excellent, that he could not find in his heart to draw his pen through them. He has not borrowed a single sentiment from Mr. H.'s performance, nor altered a single line since reading it. He is sensible that he might have improved his work by adopting some of Mr. H.'s masterly reasonings; but he is too honest and too idle to do it.



ECCLESIASTICAL CLAIMS INVESTIGATED.

ESSAY I.

ON THE UNINTERRUPTED SUCCESSION.

Most episcopalians hold, that Jesus Christ imparted to the apostles the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of the ministry; and that they conferred this gift, by the rite of ordination, upon their coadjutors and immediate successors, from whom have descended to the present time, a regular succession of episcopally ordained, and divinely inspired ministers.

All who are included in this succession are deemed regular clergymen, who are fully qualified for the office of spiritual guides, and whose labours are accompanied with the divine blessing. On the other hand, it is stiffly maintained that those ministers who cannot trace their spiritual descent through this episcopal line, are unauthorised and unaccredited teachers; intruders into the sacred ministry; vain pretenders to inspiration, and deceivers of the people; merely, because they have not received the Holy Spirit through the touch of a right reverend prelate's fingers, as you receive a spark of electric fire.

The scheme of high churchmen, for the sake of consistency, should be carried a little farther. It should be extended to family worship. The succession is of importance only as it is the channel through which the Spirit of God is supposed to be conveyed to his ministers; and the influence of the Holy Ghost,

in divine worship, is of importance only on the presumption that no religious service can be of any benefit without it. But should you allow the Holy Spirit to assist a layman in teaching his family, how can you deny divine assistance to the same person when holding forth in the conventicle? To make the succession of any value, it ought to be shown, that no person can read the Scriptures, pray, or teach to edification, in his family, without first receiving the episcopal benediction; and then every householder must either be ordained a priest himself, or keep one under his roof, or not suffer any religious service to be performed in his house.

But further; suppose a few neighbours, or relations should be present at family worship; will the Holy Spirit be startled at the appearance of these strangers, and take his flight? Or will he continue his aid, that all present may receive a blessing? The new Act of Toleration permits twenty strangers to be present at family worship;* and I have never heard that the clergy object to this as unlawful or irregular. A master of a family then may instruct and pray with his wife, eight children, six servants, and twenty others, without committing a church-sin, though here is a congregation of thirty-five persons, which is more than assemble in many parish churches for divine service. Here the Spirit has free course. It would require a profound casuist to show, that though he may do all this legally and profitably, yet it would be sinful in him to hold a meeting with the same persons in another house, or with thirty-five other persons in his own house. The Bramins taught, according to Arrian, that no private sacrifice would be acceptable to the gods, if not presented by one of the sacred order; and if the succession be a matter of any consequence, the private worship of Christians should be dispatched to heaven by an episcopal priest.

* More than twenty may be present at a revel, and there is nothing the matter; but moral instruction and devotion is, with many people, a greater sin than drunkenness.

It deserves to be noticed too, that public instruction may be given by writing, as well as by preaching. Is it not to the full as wicked in a layman to address us from the press as from the pulpit? Shall we then anathematise the theological writings of Locke, Lyttleton, West, Addison, etc., merely because the authors were not in holy orders? No advocate for the succession, I presume, will carry matters quite so far as this. And yet it must be extremely absurd to permit the laity to write on the subject of religion, but forbid them to speak upon it. He must be a subtle Jesuit who can prove, that a layman may print a discourse which will edify all his readers, but, should he preach it, it will poison all his hearers. Is the same sermon, as it comes from the pen, "the savour of life unto life;" but as it comes from the tongue, "the savour of death unto death?"

Another little circumstance should not be omitted here. It is well known that laymen, and even laywomen, have sometimes composed the discourses which the clergy preach. As the authors do not belong to the sacred order, it may be doubtful whether such productions can profit a congregation of the faithful; but the holy orators may possibly possess the art of putting spirit and life into these carnal compositions.

Once more: When it is affirmed that episcopalians only have a right to teach religion, it is not intended, we may hope, that other people have no right to talk about it. But how shall we draw the line betwixt conversation and preaching? To talk to one or two persons about their souls may possibly not be thought an invasion of the priest's office. But how far may the layman venture? may he converse with five, ten, twenty, or a hundred people at once, without transgressing the law of holy orders? One would hope that a discourse from which one or two might receive profit, could do no harm to fifty, or a hundred. In some parts of the east, according to Dr. Buchanan, the preaching of the priest is a sort of religious conversa-

tion, carried on between him and the people. He asks questions, and they return answers. If it should be said that the laity may talk about religion anywhere but in a place of worship: it may be demanded, and why not there too? Can any place be too sacred for religious improvement? If a layman be permitted to open his mouth upon so sacred a subject, I am afraid it will be difficult to prove that he has not as much right to instruct a thousand people, as two or three. Philip is said to have preached to the eunuch; but this preaching was nothing more than an instructive conversation. (Acts viii. 30, etc.)

“No bishop, no church,” is a favourite saying with the advocates for the succession. If there be any truth in this saying, it is fatal to the sentiment which has given it birth. “We find bishops,” says Stillingfleet, “discontinued for a long time in the greatest churches. For if there be no church without a bishop, where was the church of Rome when, from the martyrdom of Fabian and the banishment of Lucius, the church was governed only by the clergy? So the church of Carthage, when Cyprian was banished; the church of the east, when Miletius of Antioch, Eusebius, Samosatenus, Pelagius of Laodicea, and the rest of the orthodox bishops were banished for ten years’ space, and Flavianus and Diodorus, two presbyters, ruled the church of Antioch the mean while. The church of Carthage was twenty-four years without a bishop, in the time of Hunneric, king of the Vandals; and when it was offered them that they might have a bishop,” they refused to accept of him.*

The succession cannot be supported without admitting the church of Rome to be a true church, and her priests the ministers of Christ. But as the papists are not polite enough to return the compliment to the church of England and her clergy, many weak and timorous persons, in order to be on the safe side, embrace popery. What bishop Burnet says of James II.

* Stillingfleet’s *Irenicum*, chap. vii., p. 376.

is worth transcribing : It shows how easy it is to convert a high Churchman to the catholic faith. " He gave me this account of his changing his religion. When he escaped out of the hands of the earl of Northumberland, who had the charge of his education trusted to him by the parliament, and had used him with great respect, all due care was taken, as soon as he got beyond sea, to form him to a strict adherence to the church of England. Among other things, much was said of the authority of the church, and of the tradition from the apostles in support of episcopacy. So that when he came to observe that there was more reason to submit to the catholic church than to one particular church, and that other traditions might be taken on her word, as well as episcopacy was received among us, he thought this step was not great, but that it was very reasonable to go over to the church of Rome. And Dr. Steward having taught him to believe a real but unconceivable presence of Christ in the sacrament, he thought this went more than half way to transubstantiation."*

A successionist maintains that the ministrations of others are invalid, from whence it follows, that those whom they baptize are not christians. Archbishop Secker was baptized by a dissenting minister, who had not episcopal ordination ; his Grace therefore was not a christian, and all his ministrations, of course, were of none effect. Now, it is a remarkable fact, and deserving of special notice by bigots, that Secker baptized the King, and most of the Royal family; † it will follow, from this high church logic, that they were not made christians. I should be glad to know what sort of a body the church of England was, when its spiritual and political heads were both infidel ? The apostle informs us that " from the head, the whole body is fitly joined together and compacted ;" which figure, if we may apply it to this case, will prove that

* History of his own Times. Vol. I., p. 275, 276.

† Eclectic Review, Vol. vi., p. 368.

the Church was infidel from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot.

If it be true that the Holy Ghost is solely at the disposal of the bishops, is tied to the succession, and has no possible way of access to a minister but through the medium of episcopal hands; it must follow, since the success of the ministry depends upon the divine blessing, that it is absolutely necessary, not only that priests should be episcopally ordained, but that their people should be able to trace their spiritual descent from some apostle. Every man must be damned, according to this prelatical divinity, who is not under the guidance of a minister included in the succession. As the laity are so deeply interested in this affair, they ought to be furnished with faithful copies of all the orders received by the succession of priests, who have transmitted the Holy Ghost from an apostle down to their present pastor. Without this they can be at no certainty respecting their salvation. It can avail them nothing to believe the divinity of the Scriptures, repeat an orthodox creed, worship with a most excellent liturgy, receive the sacraments with the profoundest reverence, practise christian morality with the greatest strictness, and rejoice in the hope of heavenly bliss with the most rapturous delight; for if their parson be not in the succession, they will soon be in hell. This point, therefore, must be settled first of all; and it would be folly to enter on a religious course before the succession is scrupulously traced, and clearly made out.

No clergyman, however, has had the goodness to favour his flock with this famous history. Not one in fifty of the people know who ordained their priest; and not one in a thousand know who consecrated the bishop.*

* "No man ever did to this day," says Mr. Baxter, "demonstrate such a succession, for the proof of his ministry; nor can all our importunity prevail with papists to give us such a proof. It is a thing impossible for any man now alive, to prove the regular ordination of all his predecessors to the apostles' days, yea, or any ordination at all. How can you tell that he that ordained you,

It is a singular circumstance, that Churchmen should make the validity of their ministrations to depend upon the succession, when not one of them pretends to trace it; but all agree to make confident assertions supply the place of proof. This is the more remarkable, as they are liberal enough in the production of historical evidence, to support matters of minor importance. When, for instance, the dispute relates to some trivial ceremonies, a folio is soon filled with citations from the primitive fathers.

In disputing with the Methodists, the clergy very often call for a miracle, in proof of their inspiration. A Methodist pleads that he received the Spirit immediately from God, in answer to prayer; a Churchman, that he received the Spirit from the bishop, by the imposition of hands. Now, why should we be credulous enough to be satisfied with a mere *ipse dixit*, in one case, and require even a miracle to overcome our scepticism in the other? Is not God both as able and as willing to give the Holy Ghost, as a bishop? The Methodist, however, does not, like his opponents, desire his mere assertion to supply the place of evidence; he believes he can prove his inspiration without disturbing the order of nature; he appeals to the purity of his doctrine, the integrity of his character, and the success of his labours; he insists that these

did not counterfeit himself to be ordained? or, at least, that he was not ordained by an unordained man? or that his predecessors were not so? It is a mere impossibility for us to know any such thing; we have no evidence to prove it."

"If the foresaid uninterrupted succession be necessary to the being of our ministry, or churches, or ordinances, then it is incumbent on all that will prove the truth of their ministry, churches, or ordinances, to prove the said succession. But this is not true; for then none could prove any of them. Either it is meet that we be able to prove the truth of our ministry, churches, and administrations, or not. If not, then why do our adversaries call us to it? If yea, then no man among the churches in Europe, on their grounds, hath any proof; and therefore must not pretend to the ministry, churches, or ordinances; but we must all turn Seckers to-day, and infidels to-morrow."—BAXTER'S *Disputations*, p. 169—175.

evidences are sufficient, without showing signs from heaven; he is ready to dispute this point with his adversaries; and he will allow them to call him an enthusiast and a fanatic, when they have shown that his ground is untenable. A miracle ought only to be demanded, when no other sufficient proof can be produced, and then the demand is reasonable. The Churchman affirms, that no man is a true minister who is not included in the succession; the succession, therefore, must be proved to justify his ministry. But, strange to tell, he has no proof to offer. Upon his own principles, therefore, he must either work a miracle to supply the defect of historical evidence, or expose himself to a retort of the charge of enthusiasm and fanaticism, for pretending to have received the Spirit of God from a man, who, it is doubtful, never possessed it.

As the clergy do not choose to give us the history of this succession, I have a right to assume that they cannot do it; but as so much stress is laid upon it, and as they take it for granted that they are all in it, I will show that this famous succession cannot be proved, and that there is very strong presumptive evidence, that our episcopalians are all out of it.

Tertullian is quoted with triumph by the clergy, as though he had brought the succession down to the present generation of bishops. Speaking of the heretics, this holy father demands—"Let them show us the original of their churches, and give us a catalogue of their bishops in an exact succession from first to last, whereby it may appear, that their first bishop had either some apostle, or some apostolical man, living in the time of the apostles, for his author or immediate predecessor. For thus it is that apostolical churches make their reckoning. The church of Smyrna counts up to Polycarp, ordained by St. John; the church of Rome to Clemens, ordained by St. Peter; and so all other churches in like manner exhibit their first bishops ordained by the apostles, by whom the apostolical seed was propagated and conveyed to others."*

* Tertul. de Prescript. c. 32.

It will be proper to make two or three remarks on this celebrated passage.

I. It appears that in the second century, when this father flourished, there were many heretical bishops not included in the succession. Even in the apostolic age, there were false apostles and false teachers, and the church in all ages since, has complained of swarms of unauthorised and unaccredited ministers. Now, how can we know that our bishops are the lineal descendants of the apostles, and not rather derived from the heretics, unless they can "give us a catalogue of their bishops, in an exact succession from first to last," and show us the apostle from whom they originate? For if it was necessary in the days of Tertullian, that a bishop, in order to prove his legitimacy, should make out an exact catalogue of all his predecessors; how much more necessary must it be now, when so many thousands have, since that time, intruded into the episcopal office.

II. Though we have Tertullian's authority for it, that the heretical bishops were not in the succession, yet it was the custom of the church, when these heretics returned to her communion, to permit them to retain the rank of bishops, without re-ordination. Thus the African and Roman churches received the donatist bishops, upon their repentance; and, without giving them new orders, permitted them to exercise their pastoral functions. Bingham has shown this at large: "Anisius, bishop of Thessalonica, with a council of his provincial bishops, agreed to receive those whom Bonosus, an heretical bishop of Macedonia, had ordained. Liberius admitted the Macedonian bishops to communion, and allowed them to continue in their office, upon their subscription to the Nicene creed, and abjuration of their former heresy. The general council of Ephesus made an order concerning the Massalian heretics, otherwise called *Euchites* and *Enthuasts*, that if any of their clergy would return to the church, and in writing anathematise their former errors, they should continue in the same station they were in before. The council

of Nice is thought* to have made the like decree in favour of the Novatian clergy. And there is nothing more certain than that the African fathers so treated the Donatist.†” When it is considered how many hundreds of heretical bishops, who were out of the succession, have in several ages been received into the church, and that these, by ordaining others, have perpetuated a race of prelates in the church, not lineally descended from the apostles; there is much room to fear, that the true succession is run out, and that the present bishops are the offspring of the spurious race of heretics.

But admitting there are still some legitimate descendants of the apostles, the odds are many against our English bishops being of that number, they are so few in comparison of the immense multitudes which formerly belonged to the Romish church; and as there is no possible way of distinguishing the true from the false, but by giving the exact catalogue, the production of this curious document is absolutely necessary, in order to obtain any satisfaction respecting the apostolical origin of our prelates. But who can make out this catalogue of bishops, from the apostles down to

* There is no room for a moment's doubt upon this subject. The following is the canon: “As to those who call themselves Puritans, if they come over to the catholic and apostolic church, the holy synod decrees, that they who are ordained shall continue in the clergy; having first professed in writing, that they will adhere to the decrees of the catholic church; that is, that they will communicate with those that have married a second time, and such as have lapsed under persecution, (who have had a time given, and a term fixed for their penance,) so that they will in all things follow the doctrine of the catholic church. When none but they are found to be ordained in any city or village, they shall all remain in the same order; but if any come over where there is a bishop or priest of the catholic church, it is clear that the bishop of the church ought to retain his dignity; and he that had been called a bishop by the Puritans, shall have the honour of a priest, unless the bishop think fit to impart to him the nominal honour [of a bishop]. Otherwise he shall provide for him the place of a village bishop, or priest; that so there may not be two bishops in one city.” Canon 8. See Clergyman's Vade-mecum, part ii., p. 49, 50.

† Bingham's Antiquities, b. iv., ch. 7, sect. 8.

the present day, without including a single heretic in it? I feel no hesitation in replying, no man living.

III. The succession was deemed important by Tertullian, not because the bishops communicated the Holy Ghost, for no one made such shocking pretensions till many centuries afterwards; but because "by them the *apostolical doctrine* was propagated and conveyed to others." The heretics, against whom this father wrote, esteemed some writings sacred, which were evidently spurious, and rejected others which the orthodox could prove to be sacred. Those churches which were planted by the apostles and their coadjutors, to whom the gospels and epistles were originally intrusted, were better qualified to judge what writings were truly apostolical, than churches which were founded but yesterday, by bishops who held no intercourse with the catholics. The apostolical origin of churches, was a matter of as much importance in this controversy, as the uninterrupted succession of bishops. "Let them show us the original of their churches. The church of Smyrna counts up to Polycarp, ordained by St. John; and all other churches exhibit their first bishops ordained by the apostles." The church of England was not planted by an apostle, nor did an apostle ordain its first bishops.

Though the bishops in the primitive churches had the custody of the divine records, yet, it is not to be supposed, that they were the only persons capable of preserving the sacred depositum inviolate. Tertullian was so far from thinking so, that in another place* he speaks of the churches themselves as keeping the holy books. Bishop Stillingfleet's remark upon this is to the point: "What he spoke before of the persons, (that is, the bishops,) he now speaks of the churches themselves planted by the apostles, which, by retaining the authentic epistles of the apostles sent to them, did thereby sufficiently prescribe to all the novel opinions of the heretics. We see then, evidently, that

* De Prescript. advers. Heret. cap. 36.

it is the doctrine which they speak of as to succession, and the persons no further than as they are the conveyers of that doctrine. Either, then, it must be proved, that a succession of some persons in apostolical power, is necessary for the conveying of this doctrine to men, or no argument at all can be inferred from hence for their succeeding the apostles in their power, because they are said to convey the apostolical doctrine to succeeding ages." *

IV. If it be still contended, that Tertullian is pleading for an uninterrupted succession of episcopally ordained ministers, as the only medium through which the Holy Ghost is conveyed to succeeding ages, it is sufficient to reply, that the authority of this father is fatal to the church of England. We have a right to demand, in his own words, of those churchmen who acknowledge his authority, "Show us the original of your church, and give us a catalogue of your bishops in an exact succession from first to last, whereby it may appear, that your first bishop had either some apostle, or some apostolical man, living in the time of the apostles, for his author or immediate predecessor. For thus it is, that apostolical churches make their reckoning." But this they cannot do. There is no such catalogue in existence. "Thus it is," says the holy father, "that apostolical churches make their reckoning." But thus the church of England cannot make her reckoning: The inference is undeniable, that the church of England is not an apostolical church. The heretics, like our episcopalians, pretended that their churches were apostolical; but mere assertions passed for nothing with our orthodox father: "Give us," says he, "the exact catalogue."

But let us leave Tertullian and proceed. There have been many impostors as well as heretics; persons who have assumed the sacred office, and forged orders.† These ordained multitudes in different ages

* Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, pt. ii., ch. 6., p. 305.

† "When I was young," says Mr. Baxter, "I lived in a village that had but about twenty houses; and among these there were

of the church ; they could not communicate to others what they had not received themselves ; it follows, that all the descendants of these religious cheats must be pronounced, in the words of the apostle, "sensual, not having the Spirit." Now, how can it be made appear that our modern prelates are not descended from these spiritual impostors?

It is worthy of inquiry, what will become of the people who are under the guidance of impostors or their successors? Must these simple souls be shut out of heaven for the tricks of their priests? If it be said, that, because they take them for true ministers, their ministrations are efficacious, though their orders are irregular ; this is giving up the point, and making the benefit of their services to depend, not upon the legality of their ordination, but upon the good opinion and pious disposition of the worshippers. It must be remarked here, that dissenters take their ministers to be true ministers ; and if this be a mistake, is it not as pardonable in them as in churchmen?

There are insuperable obstacles in the way of tracing the episcopal succession. Our bishops pretend to be derived from the Roman catholics. But it has been shown, that the succession has been interrupted in that church ; for some time after the martyrdom of Fabian

five that went out into the ministry. One was an old reader, whose original we could not reach : Another was his son, whose self-ordination was much suspected. The other three had letters of orders, two of them suspected to be drawn up and forged by him, and one that was suspected to ordain himself. One of them, or two, at last, were proved to have counterfeit orders, when they had continued many years in the ministry. So that this is no rare thing.

"Among so many temptations that in so many ages since the apostles' days, have befallen so many men, as our predecessors in the ministry, or the bishops' predecessors have been, it were a wonder if all of them should escape the snare. So that we have reason to take it for a thing improbable, that the succession hath not been interrupted. And we know that in several ages of the church, the prelates and priests have been so vile, that in reason we could expect no better from men so vicious, than forgery and abuse." — BAXTER'S *Disputations*, p. 170.

and banishment of Lucius, the orthodox were governed by the inferior clergy. It is much to be feared, that the succession was interrupted again in the person of Pelagius the first. The canons of the ancient church and of the church of England state, that no less than three bishops are necessary to make a bishop. But it is a well known fact, that this pope was ordained by only two bishops and one presbyter. If it, therefore, requires the united powers of three bishops to inspire an episcopal brother with the Holy Ghost, and if the power of a presbyter be not equal to that of a bishop, it is a clear case that Pelagius was not a true bishop, and that, consequently, the succession has failed.

But supposing the succession of popes had not been interrupted, how do we know that their ordinations were all valid? It was seldom, if ever, the case that a pope ordained his successor, because the canons forbade it.* The greater part of the bishops who ordained the popes are perfectly unknown; though they ought not only to be known, but their spiritual descent from St. Peter proved; for if any of them were out of the succession, it is impossible they should put the popes into it. When it is considered by what base arts many obtained the popedom, and that not a few of them were ordained by reputed heretics and schismatics, it must be next to a miracle if the succession has not been interrupted. And as the exact catalogue cannot be given, a miracle to supply its place ought to be wrought, to induce a belief in any rational mind, that

* The apostolical constitutions decreed, canon 68, that "a bishop is not allowed to ordain [for a successor, as the following words clearly show] whom he pleases, by conferring the episcopal dignity on a brother, son, or any other near relation. For it is not just that there should be heirs of the episcopal office, or that what belongs to God should be given according to the affections of men, nor the church be brought under the laws of inheritance. If any one do this, let the ordination be null, and let him be punished by suspension from communion." And the synod of Antioch ordained, canon 23, that, "It is not lawful for a bishop to appoint his own successor, though he be at the point of death. If anything of this sort be done, let such provision be null."

the chain has been preserved unbroken, and that our prelates are a part of St. Peter's spiritual progeny.

If the succession cannot be traced through the popes, it cannot be made out at all; because there is no regular succession of bishops, from the apostles to the present time, in any other church; and if there even were, it would still be impossible to show that they were all ordained by persons duly qualified to confer holy orders.

Another circumstance fatal to the episcopal succession is, that in the primitive times presbyters often ordained persons to the ministry in general, and sometimes even ordained bishops; so that if a modern bishop could reckon up to some apostle, it is ten to one but when he came to trace through the three or four first centuries, he would find several presbyterian links in his chain, and even one of these would spoil the whole.

Bishop Stillingfleet, has proved, from Jerom and the Canonists, that "in the primitive church the presbyters all acted in common for the welfare of the church, and either did or might ordain others, the same authority with themselves; because the intrinsical power of order is equally in them, and in those who were after appointed governors over presbyters. And the collation of orders doth come from the power of order, and not merely from the power of jurisdiction. It being likewise fully acknowledged by the schoolmen, that bishops are not superior above presbyters as to the power of order."* He informs us, in another place, that "in the year 452, it appears by Leo, in his epistle to Rusticus Narbonensis, that some presbyters took upon them to ordain as bishops; about which he was consulted by Rusticus what was to be done in that case with those so ordained." Leo replied, "Those clergymen who were ordained by such as took upon them the office of bishops, in churches belonging to proper bishops, if the ordination were performed by

* *Irenicum*, chap. vi., p. 273.

the consent of the bishops, it may be looked on as valid, and those presbyters remain in their office in the church." So that by the consent, *ex post facto*, of the true bishops, those presbyters, thus ordained, were looked on as lawful presbyters, which could not be, unless their ordainers had an intrinsical power of ordination, which was only restrained by the laws of the church, for if they have no power of ordination, it is impossible they should confer anything by their ordination. If to this it be answered, that the validity of their ordination did depend upon the consent of the bishops, and that presbyters may ordain, if delegated thereto by bishops, as Paulinus might ordain on that account at Antioch; it is easily answered, that this very power of doing it by delegation, doth imply an intrinsical power in themselves of doing it. For if presbyters be forbidden ordaining others by Scripture, then they can neither do it in their own persons, nor by delegation from others. And if presbyters have power of conferring nothing by their ordination, how can an after consent of bishops make that act of theirs valid, for conferring right and power by it?" *

The Synod of Ancyra decreed, canon 13: "It is not lawful for *chorepiscopi* to ordain presbyters or deacons; nor for the presbyters of the city, in another parish, without the bishop's letter." This shows that city presbyters might ordain anywhere, with the bishop's licence; and in their own parish, perhaps, without it.

Having shown that anciently it was not disputed but that presbyters had a right to ordain, it will be proper to give some examples of their making bishops. But before I do this, I wish to make one observation. If the validity of presbyterian ordination be admitted, the dissenters cannot be out of the succession, suppose the clergy be in it. Wesley and Whitfield, the founders of two considerable sects, were both presbyters of the church of England; the founders of most of the other sects were either puritan or noncon-

* Irenicum, chap. vii., p. 380, 381.

formist clergymen who left the establishment; and among them all the succession has been perpetuated.

The presbyters of the church of Alexandria, according to Jerom, exercised the privilege of ordaining their own bishops, from the death of the evangelist Mark, to the time of Dionysius, a period of nearly two hundred years. Eutychius, patriarch of Alexandria, expressly affirms, "That the twelve presbyters, constituted by Mark, upon the vacancy of the see, did choose out of their number one to be head over the rest, and the other eleven did lay their hands upon him, and blessed him, and made him patriarch." *

It is scarcely credible that these presbyters would have had the temerity to make a bishop, had they not received instructions to that effect from Mark, previous to his decease. The apostle John is supposed to have lived about thirty-five years after the death of this evangelist. Mr. Baxter makes a pertinent observation upon this case: "Now I would leave it," says he, "to any man's impartial consideration, whether it be credible that the holy apostles, and all the evangelists or assistants of them, then alive, would have suffered this innovation and corruption in the church, without a plain disowning it and reproving it? Would they silently see their newly established order violated in their own days, and not so much as tell the churches of the sin and danger? Or, if they had indeed done this, would none regard it, nor remember it, so much as to resist the sin? These things are incredible." †

Here then we have an example of presbyters making a bishop, in the days of the apostles, and in an orthodox church, to be the immediate successor of an inspired evangelist. As these presbyters had been for years under the pupilage of Mark, they acted most probably, in this instance, in obedience to his commands; for it cannot be supposed that he would neglect to give them full directions in an affair of such

* Stillingfleet's *Iren.*, chap. vi., p. 273, 274.

† Baxter's *Disputat.*, p. 134.

vast importance as the appointment of his successor. This example would no doubt be extensively influential; and the frequency of presbyterian ordination in the primitive churches must involve the episcopal succession in inextricable difficulties.

If it were possible to trace the present race of bishops up to their originals, it would turn out, I believe, in most instances, that they are derived from presbyters. "If we believe Philostorgius," says Stiltingfleet, "the Gothic churches were planted and governed by presbyters for above seventy years. And great probability there is, that where churches were planted by presbyters, as the church of France by Anodochius and Inignus, that afterwards, upon the increase of churches and presbyters to rule them, they did from among themselves choose one to be as the bishop over them, as Photinus was at Lyons. For we nowhere read, in those first plantations of churches, that where there were presbyters already, they sent to other churches to derive episcopal ordination from them."*

There is very strong evidence that our English bishops, in particular, are derived from presbyters of the church of Scotland. From the time of their conversion in the year 263, to the coming of Palladius in the year 430, the Scotch were governed by presbyters (called Culdees) and monks. Bishops were never much in vogue with our northern neighbours. Austin revived their dying episcopacy; but it became extinct in about a century afterwards. "Mr. Jones has undertaken to prove at large, that the ordination of our English bishops cannot be traced up to the church of Rome as its original; that in the year 668, the successors of Austin, the monk, who came over A.D. 596, being almost entirely extinct, by far the greatest part of the bishops were of Scottish ordination, by Aidan and Finan, who came out of the Culdee monastery of Columbanus, and were no more than presbyters; though, when the princes of the northern nations were

* *Irenicum*, chap. vii., p. 375.

converted by them, they made them bishops; that is, gave them authority over the clergy, and took other bishops from among their converts. So that, denying the validity of presbyterian ordination, shakes the foundation of the episcopal church of England.”*

If we try to trace the succession downwards, we are surrounded with difficulties, at the very beginning. It must first be proved that Peter visited Rome, and then that he acted as bishop there, which is no easy task. But when we have fairly seated him on the episcopal throne of the imperial city, I am afraid we must stop short.

The learned are not agreed who was his immediate successor. “Some,” says Bingham, “reckon Linus first, then Anacletus, then Clemens; others begin with Clemens, and reckon him the first in order from St. Peter.”†

Stillingfleet observes, that the Romish succession “is as muddy as the Tyber itself. For here,” says he, “Tertullian, Ruffinus, and several others, place Clement next to Peter. Ireneus and Eusebius set Anacletus before him; Epiphanius and Optatus, both Anacletus and Cletus; Augustinus and Damasus, with others, make Anacletus, Cletus, and Linus, all to precede him. What way shall we find to extricate ourselves out of the labyrinth, so as to reconcile it with the certainty of the form of government in the apostles’ times? Certainly, if the line of succession fail us here, where we most need it, we have little cause to pin our faith upon it, as to the certainty of any particular form of church government settled in the apostles’ times, which can be drawn from the help of the records of the primitive church, which must be first cleared of all defectiveness, ambiguity, partiality, and confusion, before the thing we inquire for, can be extracted out of them.”‡

* Doddridge’s Lect. on Div. Lect., 197.

† Antiquities, b. ii., ch. i., sect. iv.

‡ Iren., p. ii., ch. vi., p. 322.

The same writer remarks: "In none of the churches most spoken of, is the succession so clear as is necessary. For at Jerusalem, it seems somewhat strange, how fifteen bishops of the circumcision should be crowded into so narrow a room as they are, so that many of them could not have above two years to rule in the church. And it would bear an inquiry, where the seat of the bishops of Jerusalem was, from the time of the destruction of the city by Titus, (when the walls were laid even with the ground by Musonius,) till the time of Adrian; for till that time, the succession of the bishops of the circumcision continues. For Antioch, it is far from being agreed, whether Evodius or Ignatius succeeded Peter or Paul, or the one Peter and the other Paul. At Alexandria, where the succession runs clearest, the original of the power is imputed to the choice of presbyters, and to no divine institution. But at Ephesus, the succession of bishops from Timothy, is pleaded with the greatest confidence, and the testimony brought for it is from Leontius, bishop of Magnesia, in the council of Chalcedon, who says, 'From Timothy to this day, there hath been a succession of seven and twenty bishops, all of them ordained in Ephesus.'" Two members of the council proved, however, that several of the bishops of Ephesus were not ordained in that city; and my author goes on to remark upon it, that "if he were out in his allegation, no wonder if he were deceived in his tradition. If then, the certainty of succession relies upon the credit of this Leontius, let them thank the council of Chalcedon, who have sufficiently blasted it, by determining the cause against him in the main evidence produced by him. So much to show how far the clearest evidence for succession of bishops, from apostolical times, is from being convincing to any rational man." *

The truth of the matter appears to be this: When bishops lost the humble, unassuming spirit of their divine Master, and began to thirst for power and domi-

* Iren., p. ii., ch. vi., p. 301—303.

nion in the christian world, they endeavoured to promote their carnal objects by spiritual pretences; as these were likely to have most weight with the credulous multitude. If, therefore, an apostle, or an evangelist had only visited the city where a bishop afterwards resided; or, if a passable fiction to that effect could be invented, he was reckoned the first bishop of that church; because this would give respectability and authority to the successors of so eminent a servant of God. Thus Peter was made bishop of both Antioch and Rome, James of Jerusalem, Mark of Alexandria, Ananias of Damascus, Barnabas of Milan, Silas of Corinth, Timothy of Ephesus, Titus of Crete, Epaphroditus of Philippi, etc., etc. The bishops of Rome laid claim to Peter as their spiritual father, though it is doubted by many whether he ever saw Rome. The next step was to make him the chief or prince of the apostles, and then to make his successors the princes or lords of the universal church.

If this succession could be traced, its history would furnish many amusing anecdotes; but the number of astonishing miracles connected with it, are sufficient to excite the suspicion of the incredulous. Eusebius gives a very diverting account of the election of Fabian.* When the people were assembled to choose a bishop, they observed a dove to settle upon Fabian's head; this was taken for an emblem of the Holy Ghost, and they immediately and unanimously fixed upon him for their pastor. Whether this was a trick of Fabian to obtain a bishopric, or a story framed by priests, to colour over some irregularity in the proceedings, it is difficult to say. Suppose a Methodist were to plead, as a proof of his call to the ministry, that a pigeon, or a goose, had settled upon his head, how would all the regular clergy exclaim against the enthusiasm and fanaticism of the preacher! but when such a prodigy occurs at the election of an orthodox bishop, it is, no doubt, a special divine interposition!

* Lib. vi., ch. xxix.

But supposing it were proved ever so clearly, that there has been an uninterrupted succession of episcopally ordained ministers in the church, and that our clergy are included in this succession; it is still easy to show that the course of the Spirit has been interrupted, and this renders the outward succession of no value whatever. Suppose the charter of a nation's liberties were deposited in an iron chest, and an order of men appointed to have the custody of it; if the charter by any means were lost, how ridiculous it would appear in these gentlemen, were they still to keep up their order by a ceremonious incorporation of new members to fill up the occurring vacancies, and to stand sentry in their pompous robes of office over the empty box.

According to the canons of the ancient church, there are many things which will nullify the ordination of a bishop; such as diabolical possession, simony, heresy, immorality, etc.* An ordination ought not to be annulled, if the Holy Ghost be actually given; because in this case God has approved and confirmed the work of his servants; and no authority on earth has a right to undo what bears the stamp of divine approbation. The business, therefore, of unmaking a bishop, goes upon the supposition, that he did not receive the Holy Ghost at his consecration, in consequence of his not coming up to the canonical character of a candidate for the high and holy office. But the history of the church furnishes innumerable instances of persons who were not canonically qualified, being consecrated; and these, by consecrating others, have perpetuated the succession. No man can impart to another what he does not possess himself; and therefore all the successors of an uncanonical bishop, must be destitute of the Spirit of God. Hence it follows, that an uninterrupted succession of episcopally ordained men, if it could be made out, would avail nothing, since it is a fact that the course of the Spirit has been interrupted many centuries ago, by the ordination of improper persons.

* Bingham's Antiquities, book xvii., chap. v.

There is no way of getting over this difficulty but by rejecting, as some have done, the authority of the ancient canons, and insisting that the sins of men cannot interrupt the Spirit of God. Those who entertain this sentiment, suppose that the Spirit is given to a bishop, not for his own benefit, but for the good of the church: and therefore, though personally his lordship may be as wicked as the devil, yet ministerially he is full of the Holy Ghost. What was the father of the faithful, in comparison of such believers as these!

The authority of these canons, however, is acknowledged by the church of England. At the consecration of a bishop we are informed, that "the archbishop, sitting in his chair, shall say to him that is to be consecrated, 'Brother, forasmuch as the holy Scripture, and the ancient canons command, that we should not be hasty in laying on hands, and admitting any person to government in the church of Christ, etc.'" Let us inquire into the reason of these canonical nullities.

Diabolical possession, according to the canons, is sufficient to annul the ordination of a bishop. This goes upon the supposition, that the Holy Ghost will not enter a heart which he finds pre-occupied by the devil. This is modest. If the canon be wrong, we must suppose, either that the Holy Spirit and Beelzebub agree to live together, which is contrary to the apostle, who asks, "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" or else, that the old serpent slinks away as the Holy Ghost enters. But if this latter be the fact, how shall we account for the vices of some of the holy order, who have not come behind the very chief of sinners? If a pope, who is full of the Holy Ghost, can be as wicked as a layman, who is full of the devil; what would his holiness be, if left to himself?

As to simony, or the purchasing a bishopric with money, which takes its name from Simon Magus, who wanted to strike a bargain for the divine Spirit with the apostle Peter, nothing can be more clear than that the canons which annul the ordination of a bishop guilty of this sin, are supported by sacred Scripture.

“And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostle’s hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter : for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.” (Acts viii. 18—21.) If this passage does not teach that the Holy Ghost cannot, like worldly commodities, be purchased with money, there can be no meaning in language. We have then the best warrant in the world for saying, that the divine Spirit never entered into the head or heart of a simonist. “In the eleventh century,” says Dr. Jortin, “simony was universally practised, particularly in Italy. St. Romualdus exerted himself, and preached against it with vehemence. But, says Damianus, the writer of his life, (who was a bishop,) ‘I much question whether he ever reformed one man : for this poisonous heresy is the most stubborn and difficult of all to be cured, especially amongst the clergy of higher rank. They promise amendment, and they defer it from day to day ; so that it is easier even to convert a Jew than a bishop.’” * Let the advocates for the succession tell us where the Spirit was when the bishops were universally guilty of simony, and not one of them could be reformed !

If it were granted that a wicked bishop in the church is filled with the Spirit, yet it will not be maintained that he carries the Spirit out of it, when he either leaves it voluntarily, or is cut off from it. The sin of schism is of such a nature, that, according to the unanimous testimony of both papists and protestants, the party guilty of it is cut off from Christ. But there have been schisms in all ages of the church, and many of the schismatical bishops have perpetuated the succession. Hear the author of the Case of the Regale,

* Rem. on Ecclesiastical History, vol. iii., p. 120.

a stanch asserter of the divine right of episcopacy: "It would be hard," says he, "to find a bishop against whom some of these objections (relating to the succession) do not lie. For example: all the bishops of the reformation, as well in England as elsewhere, are struck off at one blow; for they were all derived from those whom they now account to be, and then to have been, heretics. And the ordinations of the church of Rome must go off too, especially since the council of Constance, that turned out all the popes that were then in the world,* which were three anti-popes contending one with another. And they cannot say of any of their ordinations at this day, that they are not derived from some of the anti-popes. Nay, all the churches, as far as the Arian heresy reached, may come under this objection; for many of their ordinations were derived from some or other who were Arians, Semi-Arians, etc."†

Bellarmino acknowledges, "That for above eighty years together, the church, for want of a lawful pope, had no other head than what was in heaven." And Baronius complains, "How deformed was the Roman church, when whores, no less powerful than vile, bore the chief sway at Rome, and at their pleasure, changed sees, and appointed bishops; and which is horrible to mention, did thrust into St. Peter's see their own gallants, false popes! Christ was then, it seems, in a very deep sleep; and, which was worse, when the Lord was thus asleep, there were no disciples to awaken him, being themselves all fast asleep. What kind of cardinals can we think were chosen by these monsters?"‡ Such is the account given by these two famous popish historians! Who can look this in the face and still plead for the succession?

To come to the church of England; she is either guilty of schism, in leaving the church of Rome, or

* The sin was not in turning them out, but in letting them in again.

† See Rights of the Christian Church, chap. ix., p. 367.

‡ See Rights of the Christian Church, chap. ix., p. 354.

she is not. If the church of Rome, at the time of the reformation, was a true church of Christ, and enjoyed his Spirit, then the church of England is schismatical, having cut herself off from Christ and his Spirit, by leaving his people; in which case the succession is good for nothing, since their lordships, the bishops, have left the Spirit behind them. If the church of Rome was a false church, which God had deserted, then the separation is justified, but the Spirit is lost; for the popish bishops could not give the Holy Ghost to protestants, if they had it not themselves. This is a two-edged sword, which cuts both ways; for, whether you justify the separation or not, you destroy the succession.

If it were true that the Holy Ghost is given to bishops, not to render them virtuous, but to give efficacy to their ministrations, it must follow, that they could not fall into heresy; because God cannot give his blessing to the preaching of false doctrine. Upon this point the catholics are consistent: they make their pope infallible, and maintain that their church cannot err. But has there never been an instance of a prelate broaching heresy? Did not hundreds of bishops, supposed to be in the succession, once embrace Arianism, which our bishops hold to be a damnable heresy? What council can be named which did not curse some bishops, the validity of whose ordination was never disputed, for holding opinions contrary to the catholic faith? And, even in this country, do all the clergy who have received episcopal ordination, preach the same doctrines? It is true they have all subscribed to the same creed, and conform to the same rites and ceremonies of devotion; but it is too notorious to be denied, that the articles, homilies, and liturgy, are often contradicted, and their doctrines ridiculed, in the pulpit. Among the clergy are Arians, Socinians, Swedenborgians, Arminians, and Calvinists; and even the celebrated impostor, Joanna Southcote, boasted of a trinity of parsons in her train of deluded votaries. And how could there be those fierce contentions between the evangelical

and rational divines, as they are called, if they were all kept by the Holy Ghost of the same mind and of the same judgment? Does not the church of England attempt to justify her separation from the church of Rome, on the ground that the pope is fallible, and that his church has erred? If those, therefore, who possess the Holy Ghost are preserved by him from error in doctrine, is it not certain, that neither popish nor protestant priests enjoy his influence?

The pretence that the Holy Ghost is not given to preserve from all errors in general, but only from fundamental errors in particular, will not serve the cause of the succession. The church of England has adopted the creed of Athanasius, which declares, that all who reject his explication of the Trinity shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly. Now, it is a fact, that at one time, nearly all the clergy in Christendom were Arians; and yet the Arian bishops were in the succession, or else ours are out of it. The homilies of the church of England, to which every clergyman subscribes, as containing a godly and wholesome doctrine, fit to be read in churches by ministers, declare, that "the popes and prelates of Rome, for the most part, are worthily accounted among the number of false prophets and false Christs, which deceived the world a long while;" and pray that the gospel of Christ may be preached and received in all parts of the world, "to the beating down of sin, death, the pope, the devil, and all the kingdom of antichrist."* But these wretches, the Roman bishops, who are here classed with sin, death, and the devil, as enemies to Christ, are supposed to have filled our bishops brimful of the Spirit of Christ, for the office and work of governors in the church. Here are incontrovertible proofs, if the church of England may be credited, of bishops, whom churchmen believe to have been in the succession, erring in fundamentals. Hence the laity should be upon their guard, and not implicitly receive the dogmas of their

* Homily for Whitsunday, part 2nd.

spiritual guides ; they may pay dear in the next world, as well as in this, for being priest-ridden.

The canons suppose, that ignorance is a sufficient reason for annulling an ordination, because no man can teach religion who does not understand it. Pope Gregory VI. could neither write nor read ; was he not admirably well qualified to discharge the spiritual duties of his exalted station ? Sculphus was made archbishop of Rhemes, when he was between four and five years of age ; was this grave and venerable prelate filled with the Holy Ghost, to teach and govern the church, when he was only just got out of his nurse's leading-strings ? There have been thousands of priests as illiterate as Gregory, and others who never saw the sacred writings ; but the magic touch of a bishop's hand, it seems, transformed these ignoramuses into infallible guides.

But what shall we say of professed infidels in the chair of St. Peter ? A council was called at Rome in the year 963, by the emperor Otho, to examine the conduct of pope John XII., when it was proved by many witnesses, " That he ordained bishops for money ; and ordained a boy of ten years old, bishop of Tudortine. That he was guilty of sacrilege, there needed no witness but eye-sight ; and that he was chargeable with adultery, they affirmed, who certainly knew that he abused the widow of Ragnerius, and his father's concubine, and Anna, a widow, and her niece ; and made the holy palace a common bawdy-house and stew. That he put out the eyes of his spiritual father, Benedict, and killed him thereby. That he killed John, a cardinal sub-deacon, by cutting off his ——— ! That he set houses on fire, and went armed and harnessed as a soldier. They all, both clergy and laity, cried out, that he drunk a health of wine 'to the devil. 'That at his play at dice, he would crave the help of Jupiter, Venus, and other demons," etc. The bishops, deacons, clergy, and people of Rome, swore to the truth of the above depositions in these words : " If both the things read by Benedict the deacon, and filthier and greater villanies were not

committed by pope John, let not St. Peter absolve us from the bonds of our sins; let us be found tied with the bonds of Anathema, [or cursed from Christ,] and be set at Christ's left hand at the last day, with those that said to God the Lord, 'Depart from us, we would not have the knowledge of thy ways.'"

The council deposed John, and set up Leo. John called a synod of bishops, who styled him, "The most godly, and most holy pope," and cursed Leo and all his followers. The next year, he was caught in bed with another man's wife, and the incensed husband dispatched his holiness, by knocking out his brains. Baronius and Binius, two celebrated historians of the Romish church, make John the true pope to his death, (in opposition to Leo,) and trace the succession through him.* An infidel, a simonist, a drunkard, an adulterer, a murderer, a worshipper of idols and devils; a thing in human shape, worse than a beast, and bad as Beelzebub, is made Christ's vicar upon earth; has the power of saving and damning whom he pleases; is full of the Holy Ghost, is the father of the faithful, and the dispenser of all spiritual blessings! All this must be believed, or the succession is lost! It certainly must require all the faith of a priest, to swallow so strange a compound of things spiritual, carnal, and devilish.

This is not a solitary instance of the most shocking wickedness in the superior clergy. Unnatural lusts were so frequent and public, that St. Bernard, in a sermon preached to the clergy of France, affirmed sodomy to be so common in his time, that bishops with bishops lived in it.† Nothing can be a stronger proof of the degraded state of morals among the clergy in those times than the following: "It is an amazing thing," says Burnet, "that in the very office of consecrating bishops, examinations are ordered concerning those crimes, the very mention of which give horror; *De coitu cum masculino, et cum quadrupedibus.*"‡ If

* Baxter's Church History, p. 328—331.

† Burnet's Exposit., Art. xxxii., p. 333, fourth edition.

‡ Burnet's Exposit., Art. xxviii., p. 308.

these monsters were under a divine influence, the devil can scarcely be supposed to be without it; and if their inspiration be denied, the succession cannot be supported.

In the *Universal Magazine* for June, 1758, a very entertaining account is given of the election of a pope; from which the reader may judge how far the Holy Ghost is concerned in the business. It is stated, that "during the whole time of the conclave's sitting, the city abounds with pasquinades, copies of which are daily, in a secret manner, sold in the coffee-houses to foreigners; but they are, for the most part, wretched performances. As all magistracies now cease, many disorders and outrages are every day committed, especially in the country; and in Rome itself, it would be imprudent in foreigners, who have no connexion with the candidates, and consequently should have nothing to fear, to be out of their lodgings after it is dark; twenty or thirty persons being generally murdered in its streets, before the election is concluded."

"The conclave is the scene where the cardinals principally endeavour to display their parts in artful intrigues; and many transactions pass here, which are far from showing that they are divinely inspired. It is a notorious fact, that whilst they sat to elect a pope in 1721, their animosities ran so high, that they proceeded to blows, with their hands and feet, and threw the stanchions each at the other. It is, therefore, not in the least surprising, that among the other officers of the conclave, are one or two surgeons."

The English reformers were no advocates for the episcopal succession: they freely admitted a sentiment which is fatal to it; namely, that there is no difference in point of order betwixt bishops and presbyters, according to the New Testament. The archbishops, bishops, and clergy, in their book, entitled, "*The Instruction of a Christian Man*," which they subscribed with their hands, and dedicated to the king in the year 1537, expressly declare, in the chapter of orders, "That priests and bishops by God's law are one

and the same ; and that the power of ordination, and excommunication, belongs equally to them both." The same declaration is made in the book entitled, "Necessary Erudition for any Christian Man," which was published by act of Parliament in the year 1543, and prefaced with an epistle written by Henry VIII. In the office for the ordination of presbyters in the days of Edward VI., the following text is used : "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock of God over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," literally "bishops." But, afterwards, when the bishops got it into their heads that they are an order of ecclesiastics distinct from, and superior to, presbyters, this text was left out of the service.

The statute of 13 Elizabeth, cap. 12, admitted the validity of the ordinations of the Scotch and other reformed churches, and allowed their divines to officiate in the church of England.

Whittingham, dean of Durham, had no other ordination than the suffrages of the whole congregation at Geneva. Sandys, archbishop of York, obtained a commission, directed to himself and some others, to visit the church of Durham, with a view to deprive the dean as a mere layman. The dean having produced his testimonials, "The Lord President rose up and said, that he could not in conscience agree to deprive him for that cause only ; for, says he, it will be ill taken by all the godly, and learned, both at home and abroad, that we should allow of the popish massing priests in our ministry, and disallow of ministers made in a reformed church ; whereupon the commission was adjourned *sine die*."*

Archbishop Grindal granted a licence to Mr. John Morrison, a Scotch divine, who had only presbyterian ordination, in the following words : "Since you, the foresaid John Morrison, about five years past, in the town of Garret, in the county of Lothian, in the kingdom of Scotland, were admitted and ordained to

* Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. i., chap. vi.

sacred orders and the holy ministry, by the imposition of hands, according to the laudable form and rite of the reformed church of Scotland ; and since the congregation of that county of Lothian is conformable to the orthodox faith, and sincere religion, now received in this realm of England, and established by public authority ; We, therefore, as much as lies in us, and, as by right we may, approving and ratifying the form of your ordination and preferment done in such manner aforesaid, grant you a licence and faculty, with the consent and express command of the most reverend father in Christ, the Lord Edmund, by divine providence, archbishop of Canterbury, to be signified, that in such orders by you taken, you may, and have power in any convenient places in and throughout the whole province of Canterbury, to celebrate divine offices, to minister the sacraments," etc.*

Bishop Carleton says, " The power of order by all writers that I can see, even of the church of Rome, is understood to be immediately from Christ, given to all bishops and priests alike in their consecration."† Dr. Field argues against Bellarmine on the same ground. To cite all the authorities to the same purpose would be endless.

Bancroft, in a sermon preached at Paul's Cross, January 12th, 1588, maintained, that the bishops of England were a distinct order from priests, and had superiority over them *jure divino*, and directly from God. This doctrine had never before been publicly broached in England : it was new and strange to both puritans and churchmen. Till this time it had always been supposed, that the order of bishops, as distinct from and superior to presbyters, was a merely human institution. Statesmen took the alarm at the power of bishops being derived from God, and not from the magistrate, as this struck at the queen's supremacy.‡ But the new doctrine soon became fashionable among

* Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. i., chap. vi.

† Treatise of Jurisdict., p. 7.

‡ Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. i., chap. vii.

the clergy; and the nonsense which we have since heard about the episcopal succession, sprung out of it.

Most of the English reformers were Erastians. They held, that princes are empowered by the Almighty, to manufacture a religion and priesthood for their subjects; and our ecclesiastical constitution is founded upon this principle. They were so far from contending that there must be an uninterrupted succession of episcopally ordained ministers in the church, that they maintained, that the sole power of appointing to all sacred offices is vested in the sovereign, and that his appointment is sufficient, without any ordination or consecration at all. Cranmer has declared that, "All christian princes have committed unto them, immediately of God, the holle cure of all their subjects, as well concerning the administration of Goddes word for the cure of soul, as concerning the ministration of things political and civil governaunce. And in both theis ministrations, thei must have sondry ministers under them, to supply that which is appointed to their several office. The ministers of God's wourde under his Majesty be the bishops, parsons, vicars, and such other priests as be appointed by his Highness to that ministration. All the said officers and ministers be appointed, assigned, and elected in every place, by the laws and orders of kings and princes. In the New Testament, he that is appointed to be a bishop, or a priest, needeth no consecration by the Scripture; for election or appointing thereto is sufficient."*

What blessed work the reformers would have made of it, had they preached up, as many do now-a-days, the inspiration of the Romish bishops and clergy, and insisted that none could be true ministers of Christ who were not derived from them, nor any people obtain salvation, who were not under the guidance of pastors included in this succession. Had they admitted such absurdities as these, how could they have justified their own separation? Or have persuaded a single soul to join with them in it? Instead of this, they

* Quoted from Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, chap. vii., p. 391, 392.

boldly attacked the church of Rome as anti-christian, and charged her bishops with being full of the devil instead of the Holy Ghost. The following extract from the homilies, shows the sense of the reformers upon these points, and is as valuable for the strength of its argument, as for the weight of its authority.

“As the lion is known by his claws, so let us learn to know these men, (the popes,) by their deeds. What shall we say of him that made the noble king Dandalus to be tied by the neck with a chain, and to lie flat down before his table, there to gnaw bones like a dog? Shall we think that he had God’s Holy Spirit within him, and not rather the spirit of the devil? Such a tyrant was pope Clement VI. What shall we say of him that proudly and contemptuously trod Frederic, the emperor, under his feet, applying the verse of the psalm unto himself, ‘Thou shalt go upon the lion and the adder; the young lion and the dragon thou shalt tread under thy foot?’ Shall we say that he had God’s Holy Spirit within him, and not rather the spirit of the devil? Such a tyrant was pope Alexander III. What shall we say of him that armed and animated the son against the father, causing him to be taken, and to be cruelly famished to death, contrary to the laws both of God and also of nature? Shall we say that he had God’s Holy Spirit within him, and not rather the spirit of the devil? Such a tyrant was pope Paschal II. What shall we say of him that came into the popedom like a fox, that reigned like a lion, and died like a dog? Shall we say that he had God’s Holy Spirit within him, and not rather the spirit of the devil? Such a tyrant was pope Boniface VIII. What shall we say of him that made Henry, the emperor, with his wife and his young child, to stand at the gates of the city, in the rough winter, bare-footed and bare-legged, only clothed in linsey-woolsey, eating nothing from morning to night, and that for the space of three days? Shall we say that he had God’s Holy Spirit within him, and not rather the spirit of the devil? Such a tyrant was pope Hildebrand, most worthy to

be called a firebrand, if we shall term him as he hath deserved. Many other examples might here be alleged; as of pope Joan, the harlot,* that was delivered of a child in the high-street, going solemnly in procession; of pope Julius II., that wilfully cast St. Peter's keys into the river Tyber;† of pope Urban VI., that caused five cardinals to be put into sacks and cruelly drowned; of pope Sergius III., that persecuted the dead body of Formosus, his predecessor, when it had been buried eight years; of pope John, the fourteenth of that name, who, having his enemy delivered into his hands, caused him to be stripped stark naked, his beard to be shaven, and to be hanged up a whole day by the hair, then to be set upon an ass, with his face backward towards the tail, to be carried round about the city in despite, to be miserably beaten with rods, last of all, to be thrust out of his country, and to be banished for ever. But to conclude and make an end, ye shall briefly take this short lesson; wheresoever ye find the spirit of arrogance and pride, the spirit of envy, hatred, contention, cruelty, murder, extortion, etc., assure yourselves that there is the spirit of the Devil, and not of God, albeit they pretend outwardly to the world never so much holiness."‡

On a review of this essay, we may observe,—

I. That the doctrine of the succession is absurd, as, in its consequences, it would deprive the laity of the privilege of family worship, of writing, and even of conversing on the subject of religion; it would unchristian the supreme head of the English church, and all churches which have not set up episcopacy, and borrowed the Holy Ghost from popish prelates; and it

* It is now generally believed, that her ladyship never had the honour of sitting in St. Peter's chair.

Some may think our author too precipitate in making this concession, seeing this piece of history has been ably defended, and could not be of protestant origin, it having existed three hundred years, at least, before the reformation.—WALCH'S *His. of the Popes*, p. 116. EDIT.

† Query — Were they ever found again?

‡ Homily for Whitsunday, part ii.

would naturally dispose all who wish to be on the safe side in their religion, to go over to the church of Rome.

II. The succession cannot be proved. Its advocates are obliged to trace it through children, heretics, schismatics, infidels, idolaters, simonists, drunkards, adulterers, sodomites, and murderers ; but after raking through all this filth, they cannot make it out. The pretence then of being in the succession is a mere arbitrary assumption ; there is not a minister in Christendom who can demonstrate, upon this principle, the legality of his orders. Here all sects are upon a level ; bishops, priests, and deacons, do not stand on an inch higher ground, than tailors, cobblers, and tinkers ; they may all talk about the succession, but not one of them can prove that he is in it. If it were true, therefore, which in fact it is not, that a dissenting minister can furnish no evidence of having the Spirit immediately from God, an episcopalian has no right to complain ; the mere pretence of a sectarist is entitled to as much credit as that of a churchman.

III. Strong evidence has been produced that the succession has been interrupted ; I have a right, therefore, to assume this as the fact, till episcopalians prove the contrary. But if the chain of succession has been broken, some one, at least, must have intruded into the sacred office, from whom our high churchmen derive their spiritual powers. If this man had a right to assume the priesthood, so has any other man ; distance of time can make no difference in the right ; it is as legal to intrude into the ministry now, as it was five hundred or a thousand years ago. Call a dissenting minister, therefore, an intruder, or what you please, yet you cannot deny his right to the office, or the validity of his ministrations. If this man's assumption of the priesthood were illegal, his ordinations were illegal also ; for no one can give what he does not possess. He who holds an estate by a bad title, cannot transfer it to another with a good one. Hence it follows, that the orders of our episcopalians are good for nothing, and those of the dissenters cannot be worse.

IV. No man, it is presumed, will have the temerity to controvert the fulness of evidence produced in this inquiry, that the course of the Spirit, through the ordinations of prelates, has been interrupted many centuries ago. If there were, therefore, no possibility of receiving the Holy Ghost, but at the hands of bishops, it is certain that he has long since left the church; and this makes the ministrations of both churchmen and dissenters equally useless. As this conclusion will not be admitted, it must follow, that some person or other, after the interruption, received the Holy Ghost directly from God. But this spoils all; for admit that "our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him;" (Luke xi. 13;) and it must be very foolish to apply to bishops for it, when it is so very uncertain, upon their own principles, whether this invaluable gift be at their disposal.

Since it cannot be denied that the course of the Spirit has been interrupted, the succession of ordination is a matter of no importance at all; because the succession of ordination is contended for, on the presumption that it is the only medium through which the Holy Spirit is conveyed to the church. If the succession of ordination were proved ever so clearly, it amounts to nothing; ordination is reduced to a mere unmeaning ceremony, since the Holy Spirit has either left the clergy, or is conveyed to them through some other medium than the hands of prelates. The regularity of ordinations is no proof of the divine influence being attached to the ministrations of the clergy.* Barclay, the quaker, makes a just observation upon this subject: "The Spirit," says he, "speaking to the church at Laodicea, because of her lukewarmness, (Rev. iii. 16,) threateneth to spew her out of his mouth. Now, suppose the church of

* Our author undoubtedly is right in calling the ordination of all sticklers for the uninterrupted succession "a mere unmeaning ceremony," amounting to nothing; but surely ordination, rightly viewed and administered, cannot be so spoken of, without reflecting on the practice of the primitive and of modern churches, in a way which christian modesty forbids.—EDIT.

Laodicea had continued in that lukewarmness, and had come under that condemnation and judgment, though she had retained the name and form of a church, and had had her pastors and ministers, as no doubt she had at that time, yet surely she had been no true church of Christ; nor had the authority of her pastors and teachers been to be regarded, because of an outward succession, though perhaps some of them had it immediately from the apostles."*

V. We have seen that the sentiments of our reformers were very different from those which are now so strenuously maintained. They did not compliment the church of Rome as a true church, but pronounced her to be anti-christian; and, instead of attempting to show that the popish bishops were inspired of God, they proved them to be full of the devil. At present, no minister is permitted to officiate in the church of England who has not received episcopal ordination; whereas the reformers admitted those who had no other ordination than the hands of presbyters, or the suffrages of the people. We boast of the reformation; but how far have we retrograded towards popery!

Lastly. Having shown that the chain of succession is broken, the exclusive power claimed by priests of adding to their own body must be given up, and the right of the laity to assume, or confer the holy office must be granted.

ESSAY II.

ON ORDINATION.

ORDINATION is the act of conferring holy orders, or of initiating a person into the ministerial office. High churchmen hold, that the power of ordination was vested by Jesus Christ in the apostles, and that the apostles limited the exercise of this power to their successors,

* Apology, p. 287, 8th edition.

the bishops. It is inferred from this, that the assumption of the office, or the reception of it from laymen or presbyters, is illegal.

If it were true that bishops are the successors of the apostles, it would not follow, that they only have the right to ordain ministers, unless a restrictive clause to that effect could be found in the New Testament; but the chapter and verse have never yet been produced.

But the bishops are not the successors of the apostles. They do not possess apostolical qualifications. They can neither work miracles, nor predict with certainty future events, nor discern spirits. They do not discharge the duties of the apostolic office. The Greek word *apostolos* signifies "a messenger," a person sent by another upon some business. Jesus Christ sent his apostles to the whole world to preach the gospel and baptize their converts: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15, 16.) They were chosen by him for this express purpose; "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to *preach*." (Mark iii. 14.) Preaching and baptizing, therefore, are the two great duties of the apostolic office; but our bishops seldom* do either; these

* Dr. Markham, the late archbishop of York, preached part of a sermon in the cathedral many years previous to his death, and promised to finish it at some future opportunity, but never made good his engagement. Though this successor of the apostles has not favoured the church with any religious publication, he has enriched the republic of letters with a spelling book. "On the Christmas before his decease, he is said to have given £1,000, to each of his grand-children, amounting to the number of forty-seven; and he is reported to have left the sum of £100,000 in legacies." See Lit. Pan., vol. iii., p. 1367.

Who does not long to be a successor of the apostles, when he

duties are performed by others ; and their lordships do little else than ordain ministers, and confirm children.

The government of the church is supposed to be one part of the apostolic office ; and the bishops, as governors, are said to be the successors of the apostles. But this can give them no exclusive right to ordain ; because those who succeed to any other part of the same office, have on this ground, an equal right with themselves to confer holy orders. All preachers must be qualified to ordain, since it has been shown, that preaching is an important and essential part of the apostolic office. The same remark applies to those who perform the rite of baptism.

But the apostles were not governors of the church, at least not in the sense our bishops are. To have been the fixed and stated governors of particular churches, would have been inconsistent with their general commission, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. And they could not be constituted governors of the universal church, for this plain reason, because it was impossible for them to execute ecclesiastical discipline in every christian society which they formed. For instance : consider for a moment the astonishing travels and labours of the apostle Paul ; how could he exercise episcopal jurisdiction over the churches he planted, when he was generally some thousands of miles distant from some of them ? and how could remote churches know where to find him, when he was perpetually changing his residence ?

The practice of the apostles was, when they had planted a church, to appoint governors, or leave the brethren to manage their own affairs, according to circumstances. It does not appear that any officers were appointed in the church of Corinth ; because the discipline of it was executed by the whole society. In the

may live like a prince, and save nearly one hundred and fifty thousand pounds ? This man, who was under so great obligations to the state, did not surely give away £47,000 just before his death, with a view to evade the legacy duty !

case of the incestuous person, the apostle directed the brethren, "when gathered together," to deliver him unto Satan, and censures them for not having done this already, as they possessed a power of judging their own members. (1 Cor. v. 1—12.) And this punishment, we are told, "was inflicted of many." (2 Cor. ii. 6.) Sometimes the apostles appointed officers; so Paul and Barnabas, on an itinerant excursion, ordained elders in every church. (Acts xiv. 23.) And sometimes the apostles employed others to do this work: Paul left Titus in Crete, to ordain elders in every city, and entrusted Timothy with similar powers.

The commission of the apostles included teaching and baptizing, but not a word about governing. When they had constituted a church in any place, instead of stopping to exercise the episcopal functions in it, they set off, according to their instructions, to break up new ground. It is easy to conceive, that when, in the course of their travels, they visited a church, their advice would be asked and followed upon many points; because they enjoyed an extraordinary inspiration of the Spirit, and spoke the mind of Christ; but this no more proves that they are church governors, than that the counsellors of kings are kings themselves.

Our bishops do not possess apostolic gifts and powers, nor do they discharge the duties of the apostolic office in visiting heathen countries, and planting churches by preaching and baptizing; but only execute the discipline of the church, which the apostles appointed others to do; they are not therefore, in any official sense, the successors of the apostles; and, consequently, their assumed right to ordain, upon this pretence, falls to the ground.

When our Lord chose the twelve, "that he might send them forth to preach," he is said to have ordained them; but the word, *poico*, imports no more than "to constitute," "appoint," "perform," etc.; and there is not the slightest intimation that he used any cere-

monious consecration. After the ascension of Christ, only two persons, Matthias and Paul, were raised to the office of the apostleship; and neither of them received any human ordination. The appointment of Matthias is remarkable: "Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, (the number of the names together was about an hundred and twenty,)" and made a speech on the necessity of electing another apostle to fill the place of Judas; "and they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias." This shows that the election was in the disciples; and when they could not determine which of the two was most suitable, the apostles did not pretend to take the matter out of their hands, but all the parties agreed to refer the election to God; they, therefore, prayed, and "gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias;" and all we read more about this business is, that "he was numbered with the eleven apostles." Here the whole affair of making an apostle was managed by God and the people, without the eleven, who were present, presuming either to appoint or consecrate him.

The apostle Paul received no human ordination to preach the gospel. "I certify you brethren," says he, "that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." (Gal. i. 11—19.) From this account it is clear, that when he received his commission from heaven, he did not go to Jerusalem to receive orders from the apostles,—

no, nor apply for a licence to the civil magistrate,—but immediately entered upon his work, and was employed for full three years in preaching the gospel and planting churches, before he even saw an apostle.

There is not the slightest evidence, in the whole of the New Testament, that the apostles ordained either coadjutors, or successors to themselves in the apostolic office. In the ancient form of consecrating bishops, and in that of the church of England, Acts xiii. 1—3, is referred to; and is, therefore, no doubt, the best authority the bishops can produce to countenance their practice. Upon this transaction let it be noted, First. It is full as probable that Saul and Barnabas were set apart by the whole church, as by the prophets and teachers, since no individuals are particularised as sending them away. Secondly. There are only five officers mentioned in the account; and as two of them were set apart for the mission, there were only three, if the people be rejected, to perform the ordination, namely, Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen. But all the five were officers of the same rank before this ordination took place. They are all equally and indiscriminately called prophets and teachers. Now, if Saul and Barnabas were put into another and superior office, by this laying on of hands, which must be admitted, or the ordination was of no value, and so not worth contending about, then this case proves that equals are authorised to elect and ordain their own superiors; a principle this, which traces the origin of church power to the people; the people may make teachers, teachers bishops, etc. This strips their lordships, the bishops, of nearly the whole of their assumed importance. Thirdly. At this famous ordination, no spiritual powers are given either to preach the gospel, or to govern the church; neither is the Holy Ghost communicated to, nor yet the keys of St. Peter put into the hands of, these consecrated gentlemen, which leaves room for suspicion that the ordainers did not properly understand their business, and performed it so imperfectly, that the wisest course, perhaps, will be to nullify the whole proceedings.

Fourthly. But, seriously, the plain state of the case is this: the Holy Ghost made known to the church at Antioch, that he intended Paul and Barnabas to be separated from them for a season, upon a special mission. The brethren by fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands, recommended them to the favour and protection of Heaven. When they had finished this work, they returned "to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended by the grace of God, for the work which they fulfilled." (Acts xiv. 26.) Here this mission ended; but Paul and Barnabas were both preachers, long before this. Paul had taught christianity publicly and boldly at Damascus and Jerusalem; and they had both preached to large congregations at Antioch, for a whole year. (Acts ix. 19—29; xi. 25, 26.) All christian churches, which have any piety, imitate, in similar circumstances, the conduct of these brethren. When their ministers make itinerant excursions, they recommend them to the protection of God, and pray for the success of their labours; but they are not so ignorant as to call this an ordination to the work of the ministry.

Admitting episcopal ordination to be valid, it does not follow that it is necessary, unless the New Testament prohibits the exercise of the christian ministry to all those who have it not; and this is not even pretended.

When our episcopalians are pressed with the case of the reformed churches, which have no bishops, they generally betray a struggle betwixt bigotry and charity; to save them without bishops, would diminish the importance of the episcopal order; and to damn them merely for the want of bishops, is shocking; it is therefore gravely and shrewdly remarked, that these churches desire bishops, but cannot obtain them, for which reason they are excusable; the will is taken for the deed. This would appear plausible to some people, if it were only true. But when did they express such a wish? and why did not the English church gratify them? But if episcopal ordination be only

necessary where it may be had, it is not necessary to our dissenting ministers, because they cannot have it. Individuals have every now and then applied for it, but generally without success. The author never asked such a favour of their lordships, for two reasons. First. He esteems himself too great a heretic to be entitled to so high a privilege. And, secondly, he is afraid that holy hands, if laid upon his profane head, would not be sufficiently efficacious to mend his heart.

Mere ceremonies and matters of order are not to be regarded in cases of necessity. Our Lord healed the sick on the Sabbath-day, and bade objectors go home and study this text: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." God has not left it to the option of a bishop whether men shall be saved or not. When the bishop of Rome prohibited all public worship throughout a whole nation, was it sinful for men to meet together for the purposes of devotion and instruction? And if bishops now do not ordain a sufficient number of priests; or if those they ordain be ignorant, or indolent, men that cannot, or will not discharge the duties of their functions; must a minister of piety and abilities hold his tongue, and suffer sinners to go quietly to hell, without so much as exhorting them to repentance, for this wonderful reason, because this is the will and pleasure of a right reverend father in God? "If a man see another fall down in the streets," says Mr. Baxter, "shall he refuse to take him up, because he is no physician? If the country be infected with the plague, and you have a sovereign medicine that will certainly cure it, with all that will be ruled, will you let them all perish, rather than apply it to them, because you are not a physician? If you see the poor naked, may no one make them clothes but a tailor? If you see the enemy at the walls, will you not give the city warning, because you are not a watchman, or on the guard? If a commander die in fight, any man that is next may take his place, in case of necessity. Will you see the field lost for a point of order, because you will not do the work of a commander? A hundred such

cases may be put, in which it is plain that the substance of the work in which men can do a great and necessary good, is of the law of nature, though the regulating of it, in point of order, may be by positive law; but the cessation of the obligation of the positive law about order, does not absolve us from the common law of nature; for then it should allow us to lay by humanity." *

This he applies to the subject under consideration, and very pertinently infers, "It is better that men be disorderly saved, than orderly damned; and that the church be disorderly preserved, than orderly destroyed." All men who have ability, are obliged, by the laws of both nature and revelation, to instruct the ignorant, reprove the wicked, and comfort the distressed; and a bishop must have more authority over the conscience, than God Almighty pretends to, before he can cancel this obligation.

Objection. "But the regular clergy are quite sufficient, without the intrusion of others." That they are self-sufficient, was never doubted; excessive modesty does not rank among their failings. There are ten thousand parishes in this nation. Suppose, on an average, two hundred persons attend every parish church; and this is an over, rather than an under calculation; the sum total is two millions—not a fourth part of the population. Must the rest all perish, rather than an unordained man shall attempt their conversion? Yes, says bigotry; but charity is indignant at the thought.

If episcopal ordination be necessary, the ordainers must be *scriptural bishops*. If any sort of bishops will do, some denominations of dissenters are at least on a level with the church. The Moravians have bishops; and to mention no more, even the greatest heretics of all, the Wesleyan Methodists, have two bishops in America. But these, it will be said, are not true bishops; that is, they are not scriptural; for if they were, no christian could object to them. Let us then

* Disputat. p. 155.

inquire, whether those in the church of England be such as the New Testament requires; for, if not, they can have no more authority, and be entitled to no more attention, than the bishops among the sectaries.

I. A bishop is required to oversee and feed his flock. (Acts xx. 28.) But our bishops do neither; they never saw one in four of their flocks, nor spoke a word to one in fifty of them. To say that the bishops employ other persons to superintend and instruct them, is to make those other persons, and not the bishops, their pastors.

II. In the days of the apostles, there were many bishops to one congregation; as at Ephesus, (Acts xx. 28,) and Philippi. (Phil. i. 1.) With us there are hundreds of congregations to one bishop.

III. In the primitive times, bishops and presbyters were the same; this we shall prove as we go along, — now they differ as much as master and servant.

IV. Our Lord does not allow his ministers to assume honorary titles. “Be not ye called, Rabbi.” (Matt. xxiii. 8, 9.) To understand the import of this term, it may be necessary to remark, that the Jews had divinity schools or colleges, where the youths, destined to be teachers in their synagogues, were instructed in the ancient Hebrew language, the law, the rites and ceremonies of worship, etc. Literary titles were conferred upon the students: The highest academical honour was the title of Rabbi; which term denoted not merely a teacher, but a man of learning, and may, therefore, as Campbell has remarked, “be fitly expressed by the English term doctor.” Our bishops make a great parade of their learning, and assume the highest literary title appropriated to ecclesiastics, that of doctor of divinity.

In the same passage the apostles are enjoined to call no man father upon earth, because the use of this term, in a spiritual sense, is restricted to “our Father who is in heaven.” In contempt of the authority of Christ, and the paternity of Deity, our bishops style themselves “right reverend fathers in God.”

The apostle Peter advised aged men to assume the office of bishops, but expressly charged them not to be as "lords over God's heritage." (1 Peter v. 3.) It might have been supposed that this apostle would be regarded by our prelates, as it is from him they pretend to derive their spiritual descent. But no; instead of rejecting this title, they apply it to themselves in a two-fold sense; they are church-lords, and state-lords; lord bishops, and lords of parliament.

Without enlarging upon this subject, enough has been said to show, that the bishops of the church of England are not such as the apostles constituted in the primitive churches; for this reason they cannot possess any exclusive power of ordination, which is all that the argument requires.

Most people, when they read about a bishop in ancient times, associate modern ideas with the name. They conceive of a man who possesses thousands a year, rolling in a chariot, with a long train of attendants, living in pomp and pleasure, ranking with the first nobility of the land, and exercising spiritual jurisdiction over hundreds of churches, and hundreds of thousands of souls. But the truth is, the bishops for the three first centuries were, in general, very poor, and often selected from the lowest orders of society. For some time after, they claimed a superiority over presbyters, they each presided over one congregation only, which was frequently very small. When missionaries, who were usually called bishops, first visited a country or province, they generally commenced their labours in the principal cities; and when small societies were formed in the adjacent villages, ministers were appointed for each of them, called *chorepiscopi*, or "village bishops." When the great Gregory Thaumaturgus was made bishop of New Cæsarea, there were only seventeen christians in the city. His ministry was very successful at home; and, as a missionary, he preached and formed societies in some towns in the neighbourhood. He ordained Alexander, a collier,

bishop of Cormana, a small place in the vicinity, where he had made some converts.*

To hear some people talk on the necessity and importance of episcopal ordination, one would suppose that our Lord or his apostles had clearly explained the difference betwixt the episcopal and presbyter offices, had restricted the power of ordination to bishops, and had made the imposition of their hands essential to the validity of the ministry. But nothing to this effect can be found in the New Testament.

It is not pretended that the Scriptures afford the shadow of evidence that any apostle ordained a single bishop, except Paul; nor that he ordained one besides Timothy. This must have been a criminal omission, if it be true that there cannot be a church without a bishop, nor an orthodox bishop without episcopal ordination. Ecclesiastical historians have, however, supplied the defect of the sacred Scriptures upon this

* Baxter's Disput., p. 186, 187. In the preface to this part of his work, Mr. Baxter has given an amusing account of the election of Alexander. When Gregory conferred with the society about the choice of a pastor, the simpletons were for having a man of rank and shining abilities. While they were debating upon the subject, Gregory recollected the circumstance of Samuel anointing David, a shepherd, king over Israel; he therefore desired them to inquire, whether they had not among the lower orders, persons eminent for piety, and possessed of ministerial qualifications. This roused their indignation, and one of them had the insolence to tell him, by way of derision, that if he wished them to take a bishop from the scum of the people, they might as well choose Alexander, the collier. Gregory sent for him, and Alexander was introduced among them, ragged, and besmeared with grime and dirt, which excited general laughter. Gregory withdrew with him, examined him, and found him to be a man of parts and piety; he instructed the collier what to do, and returning to the assembly, preached on the nature of the pastoral office. By and by, Alexander, who was a comely looking man, was again presented to the brethren, purified from the filth of the flesh, and decked out in the canonicals of the episcopal order. What a change in the man! and what a change in the assembly! The poor collier was now chosen bishop, with only one dissenting voice! How many of our Newcastle and Kingswood colliers would look grave, and learned, and spiritual, and noble, were they only dressed in petticoats and powdered wigs.

subject. They inform us that the apostles ordained James bishop of Jerusalem, that Paul ordained two or three bishops of Rome, and that John did little else, for many years previous to his death, than travel through Asia ordaining bishops for the churches. These accounts are entitled to about as much credit as the vulgar stories concerning mother Shipton.

The only evidence to prove that Paul ordained Timothy is derived from 2 Tim. i. 6: "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands." Not a hint is dropped here about an ordination to the episcopal office. It was the common practice of the apostles to put their hands on persons recently converted. Peter and John laid their hands on the disciples at Samaria, and they received the Holy Ghost. Paul laid his hands on all the disciples at Ephesus, and they received the Holy Ghost. (Acts viii. 14—17; xix. 6, 7.) Were all these christians, by this ceremony, consecrated bishops? No churchman can assert this, because he cites these texts in support of confirmation, as practised by the prelates.

Mr. Baxter observes, upon the passage under consideration, that "it may be imposition of hands in confirmation, or for the first giving of the Holy Ghost after baptism (ordinarily used by the apostles) that is there spoken of. This seems probable from the apostle's annexing it to Timothy's faith, in which he succeeded his mother and grandmother; from the effects of it, 'the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind,' which are the fruits of confirming grace; and from the admonition to 'not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,' which is also the fruit of confirmation."*

The apostle exhorts Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." (1 Tim. iv. 14.) If the other text refers to ordination, so does this. Were there two separate ordinations,

* Disput. p. 205, 206.

or did the apostle and presbyters concur in making him a minister? If the former, then presbyters may ordain without the presence of a bishop; if the latter, then bishops have no more right to ordain without presbyters, than presbyters without bishops. In this case the power of ordination is divided equally betwixt them, and the union of both is necessary to confer holy orders.

Supposing this to have been an ordination, what office was it to? Our high churchmen hold that though a bishop and presbyters are sufficient to ordain a presbyter, yet three prelates are necessary to confer the episcopal office; upon their own principles, therefore, Timothy, at most, could only be made a presbyter.

The truth of the matter appears to be this: on one of Paul's visits to Lystra, the presbyters recommended to him Timothy, a lad who had lately joined their society, as a travelling companion. (Acts xvi. 1—3.) At parting, the brethren recommended their young friend to the favour and protection of Heaven, as was common in those days of piety and simplicity, by prayer and imposition of hands: "And when they had fasted and prayed, and layed their hands on them, they sent them away." (Acts xiii. 3.) The apostle assisted at the holy exercise, and Timothy received a blessing to his soul. The gift which Heaven imparted to him at this time could not be the episcopal office, because it is expressly stated to be "the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind."

If Timothy was made a bishop, it was either of the church universal, or of a particular church. If the former, he was a pope, clothed with supreme and independent power. But each of the other apostles had as much right as Paul to make such an officer: and this supposes that they might have made twelve governors of the universal church, each exercising a jurisdiction independent of the others; which is as absurd as to suppose that twelve kings might reign over this nation at the same time, each exercising the kingly power separately and independently.

But it is generally supposed that Timothy was made bishop of Ephesus. This pretence, however, is completely refuted in the following extract: "It appears that the apostle Paul left in the church of Ephesus, which he had planted, no other successors to himself than presbyter-bishops, or presbyterian ministers, and that he did not devolve his power upon any prelate. Timothy, whom the episcopalians allege to have been the first bishop of Ephesus, was present when this settlement was made; (Acts xx. 4, 5;) and it is surely not to be supposed that, had he been their bishop, the apostle would have devolved the whole episcopal power upon the presbyters before his face. If ever there was a season fitter than another for pointing out the duty of this supposed bishop to his diocese, and his presbyters' duty to him, it was surely when Paul was taking his final leave of them, and discoursing so pathetically concerning the duty of overseers, the coming of ravenous wolves, and the consequent hazard of the flock. In this farewell discourse he tells them, that 'he had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God.' But with what truth could this have been said, if obedience to a diocesan bishop had been any part of their duty, either at the time of the apostle's speaking, or at any future period? He foresaw that ravenous wolves would enter in among them, and that even some of themselves should arise speaking perverse things; and if, as the episcopalians allege, diocesan episcopacy was the remedy provided for those evils, is it not strange, passing strange, that the inspired preacher did not foresee that Timothy, who was standing beside him, was destined to fill that important office? or if he did foresee it, that he omitted to recommend him to his future charge, and to give him proper instructions for the discharge of his duty?

"But if Timothy was not bishop of Ephesus, what, it may be asked, was his office in that city? For that he resided there for some time, and was by the apostle invested with authority to ordain and rebuke presbyters, are facts about which all parties are agreed;

and which indeed cannot be controverted by any reader of Paul's epistles. To this the presbyterian replies, with confidence, that the power which Timothy exercised in the church of Ephesus was that of an evangelist, and not a fixed prelate. (2 Tim. iv. 5—9.) But, according to Eusebius, the work of an evangelist was, 'to lay the foundations of the faith in barbarous nations, and to constitute among them pastors; after which he passed on to other countries.' Accordingly we find that Timothy was resident for a time at Philippi and Corinth, (Phil. ii. 19; 1 Cor. iv. 17; xvi. 10, 11,) as well as at Ephesus; and that he had as much authority over those churches, as over that of which he is said to have been the fixed bishop. 'Now, if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear, for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man, therefore, despise him.' This text might lead us to suppose that Timothy was bishop of Corinth as well as of Ephesus; for it is stronger than that upon which his episcopacy of the latter church is chiefly built. The apostle says, 'I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.' (1 Tim. i. 3.) But had Timothy been the fixed bishop of that city, there would surely have been no necessity for beseeching him to abide with his flock. It is to be observed too, that the first epistle to Timothy, which alone was written to him during his residence at Ephesus, was of a date prior to Paul's meeting with the elders of that church at Miletus; for in the epistle he hopes to come to him shortly; whereas he tells the elders at Miletus that they should see his face no more. This being the case, it is evident that Timothy was left by the apostle at Ephesus, only to supply his place during his temporary absence at Macedonia; and that he could not possibly have been constituted fixed bishop of that church, since the episcopal powers were afterwards committed to the presbyters by the Holy Ghost in his presence."*

* Buck's Theological Dictionary, Art. Presbyt.

The fictions gathered from the ancients, to prove that Timothy was bishop of Ephesus, do not merit a serious confutation. It is said he governed that church thirty years: "A. D. 97, the pagans of Ephesus, we are told, made a great feast, in which they carried in procession the images of their gods, being masked and armed with great clubs. Timothy rushed in among them to prevent this idolatrous superstition, but they killed him with stones and with their clubs."* It is the generally received opinion that the apostle John wrote his Revelation in the year 96; if, therefore, the above story be true, Timothy must have been the angel of the church of Ephesus, to whom the apostle addressed an epistle from Jesus Christ; the one account charges him with apostacy, the other celebrates him as a martyr. The apostle Paul represents Timothy as prudent, steady and uniform; how utterly improbable that such a man should, in old age, lose his religion, and almost immediately after be inspired with fanaticism, and throw away his life by an act of indiscretion!

The case of Timothy has been examined the more closely, because the whole cause of prelatical ordination rests upon it. It may, therefore, be safely affirmed, that neither precept nor example can be produced from the New Testament to support the opinion, that the apostles ordained an order of men superior to presbyters, and vested in them the exclusive privilege of ordaining all church officers.

It is admitted, however, that the scriptures afford proof of the ordination of bishops; but these bishops were not of an order superior to presbyters. To make this subject clear to the comprehension of the illiterate, it is only necessary to explain the terms. The literal import of *presbuteros*, "presbyter," is an elder; in respect of age, an aged person. This term is, in the New Testament, applied to the members of the Jewish Sanhedrim, because they were principally old men. The aged were anciently much venerated for

* Calmet, Art. Timothy.

their wisdom and experience, and, therefore, were generally chosen to fill places of honour and trust; hence this term in process of time was applied to magistrates, and then it imported not only the wisdom and gravity of age, but the dignity and power of office. Our translators have very properly rendered this word elder. We call a man who is far advanced in life, an elderly man; and a member of a corporation who has civil jurisdiction, an alderman, or elder-man, which word was used by our Saxon ancestors to denote both an aged person and a magistrate.

The word presbyter, when applied to an officer in the christian church, signifies governor; but, as this officer had no civil jurisdiction, like the Jewish presbyters, it was necessary to explain his duty by some qualifying term; christian presbyters are therefore called *episcopous*, "overseers," "inspectors." Hence the apostle Peter (1 Peter v. 1—3) exhorts presbyters, that is, old men, to take the oversight (*episcopountes*, "to act as bishops") of the flock, and forbids them to act as lords over God's heritage.* It is well known that the Jewish presbyters were lords over God's heritage, and that the appointment of presbyters in the christian church was borrowed from the Jewish

* "The word *cleros*, 'clergy,' properly signifies, a lot. But because the land of Canaan was divided among the Israelites by lot, the word came to signify an heritage. Wherefore, believers being God's people, or portion, the different churches or congregations for worship, are called here God's heritages. In process of time the word *cleros*, 'clergy,' was appropriated to the ministers of the gospel, because, being considered as the successors of the Levitical priests, they were regarded as God's lot or portion. From this prohibition it would seem, that, in the apostles' days, the bishops were beginning to assume that dominion over their flocks, which in after times they carried to the greatest height of tyranny. Or St. Peter, by inspiration, foreseeing what was to happen, condemned in this prohibition the tyranny which in after time the clergy exercised."—MACKNIGHT *in loco*.

Here we see the impudence of church officers in appropriating to themselves exclusively a term which, in primitive times, was common to all christians. All good men are in the scripture sense of the word, clergymen. They are God's lot, or heritage; or, in a more modern phrase, the people of God.

economy; it will follow, therefore, that, if presbyters and bishops are distinct orders of officers, presbyters are the highest in dignity and power;—they are the lords and masters over the church, while bishops are only their servants to oversee or inspect it. But as no good could be expected to result from a mere transfer of lordly titles and prerogatives from one order of ecclesiastics to another, the best way would be for bishops to resign them, and presbyters to let them alone. Good old bishop Latimer has well described the effects of this strange and forbidden union of lord and bishop, in the same person: “But this much I dare say, that since lording and loitering hath come up, preaching hath come down, contrary to the apostles’ times; for they preached and lorded not. And now they lord and preach not. Ever since the prelates were made lords and nobles the plough standeth; there is no work done; the people starve. They are otherwise occupied, some in king’s matters, some are ambassadors, some of the privy council, some to furnish the court, some are lords of the parliament, some are presidents, and comptrollers of mints. Well, well. Is this their duty? Is this their office? Is this their calling? Should we have ministers of the church to be comptrollers of the mints? Is this a meet office for a priest, that hath cure of souls? Is this his charge? I would here ask one question;—I would fain know who comptrolleth the devil at home in his parish, while he comptrolleth the mint? If the apostles might not leave the office of preaching to be deacons, shall we leave it for minting? A bishop hath his office, a flock to teach, to look unto; and therefore he cannot meddle with another office, which alone requireth an whole man. He should, therefore, give it over to whom it is meet, and labour in his own business, as Paul writeth to the Thessalonians: ‘Let every man do his own business, and follow his calling.’ Let the priest preach, and the nobleman handle the temporal matters.”*

* Sermon on the Plough.

The word presbyter, is the term of office and dignity; the word bishop, is used to denote the duty of the presbyter office, which is to oversee, to inspect. Hence the same officers are sometimes called presbyters, and sometimes bishops. Thus the apostle Paul charged the presbyters of the church of Ephesus, to feed the flock, over whom the Holy Ghost had made them *episcopous*, "bishops;" (Acts xx. 17—28;) and directed Titus to ordain as presbyters, in every city in Crete, men of unblemished character, because "a bishop must be blameless," etc.; (Titus i. 5—7;) but this reason would not apply, if a presbyter and bishop were not the same.

To this it is generally and triumphantly replied, "It is granted that one and the same man is, in the New Testament, styled sometimes a bishop and sometimes a presbyter; but, although every bishop was undoubtedly a presbyter, it does not follow that every presbyter was likewise a bishop. Aaron and his sons are without any discrimination of order, frequently styled priests; but though he had the title proper to their order, they had not the title proper to his,—they are not styled high priests. The apostles Peter and John call themselves presbyters; it does not follow, however, as a matter of course, that mere presbyters may call themselves apostles. In some cases a man is at liberty to assume a title below his proper rank, but in no case to assume one above it."

This argument, if it deserves to be called one, will not solve the difficulty. Episcopalians hold, that Timothy was bishop of Ephesus; the episcopal title, therefore, according to the objection, did not belong to any other officer in that church, though it is given by the apostle Paul to the presbyters, whom he expressly calls bishops.

Neither does the argument apply to what is said on Titus i. 5—7. It is said that the episcopal office is distinct from that of presbyter, and far superior to it in point of dignity; the duties of a bishop are supposed to be quite different in many respects from

those of a presbyter, and to be much more important, arduous, and difficult. But this cannot be admitted; for it would make the apostle reason foolishly to say, that presbyters must possess such and such qualifications, because these qualifications are necessary to bishops, who are officers of superior rank. This would be as absurd, as to require every petty civil officer to possess those great abilities which are necessary to the supreme magistrate. A man may surely know how to use a constable-staff, who is not qualified to sway a sceptre.

Nothing more is required of a bishop than of a presbyter. Each must support a good moral character, be the husband of one wife, keep his family in good order, and teach and govern the church of God. (Acts xx. 17—28; 1 Tim. iii. 1—7; v. 17; Titus i. 5—9.) It is not required of either, to ordain bishops, priests, and deacons; to administer the sacraments; to confirm children; perform marriage ceremonies, and bury the dead; nor even to preach in public. When the qualifications and duties of both are precisely the same, to say that they differ as to office and order, is a contradiction in terms.*

The title of bishop was formerly given to all persons who were appointed to the oversight of either men or things. Thus the office of Eleazer the priest, in Numbers iv. 16, is styled *pekudath*, which the LXX. have rendered *episcopos*, "bishop;" because he had the oversight of the tabernacle and its furniture. The same word in the Hebrew and Greek occurs, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12. These were bishops, or overseers, of the workmen employed in repairing the house of the Lord. For the same reason, an overseer of the highways is a bishop of the highways; an overseer of the poor, is a bishop of the poor; and an overseer of a church, which every presbyter is, is a bishop of a church.

Admitting the identity of bishops and presbyters, it

* This is too strongly expressed; it is rather contending for a distinction where there is no difference, than maintaining a contradiction in terms.—EDIT.

is granted that the New Testament furnishes a few examples of bishops receiving ordination, though not a single instance can be produced of their giving it. The only persons who conferred holy orders, that we read of, were Paul and Barnabas, Timothy and Titus; the two former were apostles, and the two latter evangelists.*

But allowing that presbyter-bishops had the power of ordination, it does not follow that our bishops possess it. The presbyter office is now split into two, and its duties are divided betwixt two distinct orders of men. It has been shown, that to oversee or bishop the church, is a duty of the presbyter office. If presbyters are obliged to discharge the duties of their office personally, (and few will dispute this,) it must follow, that bishops, as an order of men distinct from presbyters, and exercising a part of their office, are unauthorised and unaccredited intruders into the christian church.

Granting, however, for the sake of argument, that presbyters are not obliged to perform all the duties of their office themselves, it cannot be denied that they are superior to all the drudges employed in their office. It is universally admitted, that a person who holds an office, the duties of which are performed by others, is superior to them in dignity and power; they are obliged to submit to his authority; they can make no new officers without his leave; he assigns them their work, and can dismiss them if they do not perform it to his satisfaction. The duty of preserving the peace and good order of society, belongs to the kingly office; but his Majesty employs a great number of magistrates to assist him in the discharge of this duty; and they of course act in his name, and by virtue of his authority. Were they to cabal and make a new king, and

* Mr. Isaac, in making this assertion, overlooked Acts vi. 2—6, where the twelve are said to have ordained the seven deacons; and Acts xiii. 1—3, where Simeon, and Lucius, and Manaen, laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul, separating them unto a special work.—EDIT.

new officers of state, they would be justly looked upon as rebels and traitors. Yet they have as much right to do this, as bishops, who only perform a part of the presbyter office, have to make presbyters and other ecclesiastical officers. The power of ordination, if it remain with either, must be in presbyters, and not in bishops.

Bishop Stillingfleet reasons well upon this subject: "Among the Jews," says he, "in the times of the apostles, it is most evident that the name *presbuteroi* imported not only dignity but power; the presbyters among the Jews having a power both of judging and teaching, given them by their *Semicha* or ordination. Now, under the gospel, the apostles, retaining the name and the manner of ordination, but not conferring that judiciary power by it, which was in use among the Jews, to show the difference between the law and the gospel, it was requisite some other name should be given to the governors of the church, which should qualify the importance of the word presbyters, to a sense proper to a gospel state; which was the original of giving the name *episcopoi* to the governors of the church under the gospel; a name importing duty more than honour, and not a title above presbyter, but rather used by way of diminution and qualification of the power implied in the name presbyter. Therefore, to show what kind of power and duty the name presbyter imported in the church, the office conveyed by that name is called *episcopo*; and presbyters are said *episcopoin*, 1 Peter v. 2, where it is opposed to that lording it over the people, as was the custom of the presbyters among the Jews. So that, if we determine things by the importance of words, and things signified by them, the power of ordination was proper to the name *presbuteros*, 'presbyter,' and not *episcopos*, 'bishop,' because the former name did then import that power, but not the latter."*

It is shown, in the preceding essay, that presbyters

* Iren., part ii., chap. vi., p. 286..

ordained in primitive times ; it is agreed on all hands, however, that this privilege was soon restricted to the bishops. How shall we account for it? The solution of this problem is important, as it completely overturns all that is said about an exclusive divine right in favour of episcopal ordination. Bishop Stillingfleet has explained the matter ; and, as too much cannot be quoted from so excellent a writer, no apology is necessary for introducing the following extract : “ When the apostles,” says he, “ were taken out of the way, and the main power left in the hands of the presbyteries, the several presbyters, enjoying an equal power among themselves, especially being many in one city, thereby great occasion was given to many schisms, partly by the bandying of the presbyters one against another ; partly by the sidings of the people with some against the rest ; partly by the too common use of the power of ordination in presbyters, by which they were more able to increase their own party, by ordaining those who would join with them, and by this means to perpetuate schisms in the church ; upon this, when the wiser and graver sort considered the abuses following the promiscuous use of this power of ordination ; and, withal, having in their minds the excellent frame of the government of the church under the apostles, and their deputies, and for preventing of future schisms and divisions among themselves, they unanimously agreed to choose one out of their number, who was best qualified for the management of so great a trust, and to devolve the exercise of the power of ordination and jurisdiction to him ; yet so as that he act nothing of importance without the consent and concurrence of the presbyters, who were still to be as the common council of the bishop. This I take to be the true and just account of the original of episcopacy in the primitive church according to Jerom.” *

Thus it appears, that when the presbyters became proud, factious, and tyrannical, the churches agreed to

* Iren., part ii., chap. vi., p. 281, 282.

throw off the yoke, and to subject their spiritual oppressors to a new order of men. This, however, was only removing a less evil to introduce a greater. These new masters ruled the churches, as well as the presbyters, with a rod of iron. They soon claimed an independent power, by divine right, to play a demon's part, and turn the church of Christ into a synagogue of Satan. Many of these ghostly fathers obtained the mitre by simoniacal practices, by adulterous and incestuous intrigues; and not a few fought their way to the throne of St. Peter, in red apparel, and in garments dyed with blood.

Though the ordination of presbyters be lawful, it is not necessary. The apostle Peter exhorts aged persons to take, or assume the episcopal office. (1 Peter v. 1, 2.) Two reasons may be assigned why the word presbyters, in this passage, signifies merely old men, and not ecclesiastical officers. First. In the fifth verse it is opposed to youth: "Likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder." Secondly. The apostle calls himself a presbyter, and makes this the ground of his exhortation. If we take the word here in an official sense, we must suppose him to urge his station in the church as the reason why his advice should be followed; but the higher the station the greater the authority; it would therefore have been more suitable to have styled himself an apostle. On the other hand, if we take the word presbyter here as relating to age, and not to office, we at once perceive the propriety, and feel the force of the apostle's address, and all difficulties vanish: "The aged I exhort, who myself also am aged; likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves to the aged."

Here is an example of an apostle exhorting old men to assume the episcopal office, and admonishing young men to submit to their authority. This epistle is directed to the christians "throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." From this it appears, that there were multitudes of churches in the apostles' days without any regular governors. In

such a case, the dictates of nature agree with the apostle's advice, that persons of age and experience should act as bishops or overseers.

What easy work it was in those times to make a bishop! Let only the old people agree to superintend the young, and the young people consent to be guided by the old, and the business was done: a college of apostolic bishops are made at once, without either imposition of hands, or clerical infusion of the Holy Ghost! but these are not lord bishops: "Neither as being lords over God's heritage."

If it still be contended, that the persons exhorted were presbyters by office, it is sufficient to reply, that if the episcopal office belonged to a presbyter, they were exhorted to take what they already held, which is absurd; and if it did not, they were exhorted to assume a superior office, which the objector maintains can only be conferred; and this destroys the whole system of priestcraft; for if the episcopal office may be assumed by a presbyter, by parity of reason, the presbyter office may be assumed by a layman.

Much confusion has been introduced into this controversy, by not distinguishing when the word presbyter denotes a church officer, and when it signifies merely an old man. It is generally supposed that, when applied to the apostles, it is to be taken in the former sense; hence it is inferred that the twelve, as apostles, were extraordinary officers and had no successors, but as presbyter-bishops they were ordinary officers, and are succeeded by us, say the episcopalians,—by us, say the presbyterians; but both are mistaken. An apostle could not be a governor of a particular church, consistent with his extraordinary commission, to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." His business was not, when he had founded a church, to sit down and govern it; he either appointed officers, or left the brethren to manage their ecclesiastical concerns themselves, and went on, pursuant to the commission he had received, to preach the gospel in other places. The case of

Peter's styling himself a presbyter, has been considered. The apostle John twice styles himself a presbyter; (2 John i.; 3 John i.;) but in both places the word imports no more than "the aged." Dr. Macknight, in his paraphrase on the first of these texts, says, "The aged apostle;" in his note on the latter, he remarks, "This appellation signifies, the aged apostle;" and, in his preface to the second epistle, he observes, "Heuman gives it as his opinion, that in the title elder, there is a reference to John's great age when he wrote these epistles, and that he was as well known by the title of elder, as by his proper name; so that elder was the same as if he had said, the aged apostle."* The apostle Paul styles himself, *Paulos presbutes*, which is properly rendered, "Paul the aged." (Phil. ix.)

It is generally believed, that public preaching is a necessary part of the presbyter office, but this is another mistake. If our bishops and priests† did not pretend to be the successors of the apostles, and did not interfere with the preaching of others, but only attended to the duties proper to their office, they ought not to be objected to for not preaching themselves; as it will be proved presently, that the office of the ministry belongs no more to them than to christians in general. The office of a presbyter is to bishop or oversee the church, which certainly does not require the person who fills it to go into the world, and preach publicly for the conversion of infidels. The apostle Paul prescribed only two duties to the presbyters of Ephesus, —to feed and oversee the church. The duty of a bishop, he informs us, is to "take care of the church

* Preface to the Second Epistle of John, Sect. 1.

† The English word priest, as applied to our clergy, is derived from the Greek word presbyter. "Who," asks the learned Joseph Mede, "can deny that our word priest is corrupted of presbyter? Our ancestors, the Saxons, first used *preoster*, whence, by a further contraction, came *preste* and *priest*. The high and low Dutch have *priester*; the French, *prestre*; the Italian, *prete*; but the Spaniard only speaks full, *presbytero*." See Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon, under the word *presbuterion*.

of God ;” and the qualifications for this office are, First. Ability to teach the church the laws of Christ, by which it is to be governed. Apt, or fit to teach. Secondly. A good example, which is self-government. An overseer must be “blameless,” etc. Thirdly. Good family government. “One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity ; for, if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God.” (1 Tim. iii. 5.) The qualifications required of a presbyter are the same. (Titus i. 5—9 ; 1 Peter v. 1, 2.)

The question is, Do teaching and feeding, in the above texts, imply public preaching ? Two reasons may be given to show they do not. First. The term feed, used in two of the passages, signifies to nourish with wholesome doctrine ; and this teaching is limited to the flock or church. Titus’s bishop is required to hold fast the faithful word, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, to exhort and convince the unruly Jewish members of the church, who were for imposing circumcision, and the ceremonies of the law, upon the Gentile believers. Here, again, the teaching is limited to the church. 1 Timothy iii. 2, is in general terms, “apt to teach,” without specifying in particular who are to be instructed ; but since the above passages have restricted the exercise of the bishop’s prophetic office to the church, there is no reason why this indefinite text should extend it further. Besides, this point is settled by the nature of the office, which consists in the government of the church ; for the instruction which it is the duty of a governor to give, must be limited to his subjects. If he undertake to teach others, it must be under another character, which any one has an equal right with himself to assume.

Secondly. Women held the presbyter office in the church as well as men ; and a necessary qualification of these lady-presbyters, or lady-bishops, (whichever you please to call them,) was to be “teachers of good things.” (Titus ii. 3.) But no one can suppose these women teachers to have been public preachers, when

he considers that the apostle would not allow a woman to pray, or even appear in the church, without her veil; and that, from the delicacy of Eastern manners, a female must have lost her character for modesty, who should have ventured to throw aside her veil, and harangue a mixed assembly of both sexes.*

As a proof that there were female presbyters in the primitive church, the reader is referred to Titus ii. 3. Macknight has the following note upon this text: "Though the word *presbutidas* commonly signifies 'aged women' indiscriminately, it evidently denotes, in this verse, such aged women as were employed by the church, in teaching the young of their own sex, the doctrines and precepts of the christian religion. For they were to be, in speech and behaviour, *ieroprepeis*, 'as became sacred persons;' and *kalo-didaskalous*, 'good teachers.' These characters, especially the last mentioned, did not belong to aged women in general, but only to such of them as were employed in teaching." His note on the second verse strengthens this interpretation: "*Presbutas*, the word used here, commonly signifies 'an old man.' But Le Clerc, in his additions to Hammond, hath showed, that the LXX. use it to denote an office of dignity; wherefore, *presbutas* being of the same signification with *presbuterous*, it may be translated in this passage 'elders.' In support of this translation, I observe, that the virtues which Titus was to inculcate on aged men, are the same with those which Timothy was to inculcate on bishops and deacons. They were to be *nephalious*, *semnous*, *sophronas*, 'vigilant, grave, prudent.' See 1 Timothy ii. 8."

The same author translates *gunaikas*, "women," in 1 Timothy iii. 11, instead of "wives," as it is rendered in the authorised version; and remarks, in a note, that "Chrysostom and the Greek commentators, with the

* This is not the place to inquire, whether the restraint which the apostle imposed, was intended to operate in those countries where ladies are permitted to display their charms in public, without their virtue being subjected to the slightest suspicion?

most ancient Latin fathers, were of opinion, that the apostle, in this passage, is speaking both of those women who, in the first age, were employed in ministering to the afflicted, and of those who were appointed to teach the young of their own sex, the principles of religion. As the manners of the Greeks did not permit men to have much intercourse with women of character, unless they were their relations, and as the Asiatics were under still greater restraints, it was proper that an order of female teachers should be instituted in the church, for instructing the young of their own sex. Of these I think the apostle writes in his epistle to Titus, chap. ii. 3, 4, where he gives an account of their office, and calls them *presbutides*, "female elders," because of their age. And it is believed that they are the persons called widows, of whose maintenance by the church the apostle speaks, 1 Timothy v. 2, and whose character and state he there describes, ver. 9, 10. Clement of Alexandria reckons widows among ecclesiastical persons: "There are many precepts in scripture concerning those who are chosen, some for priests, others for bishops, others for deacons, others for widows." (Padag., lib. iii., chap. 12.) Grotius tells us, these female presbyters or elders, were ordained by the imposition of hands, till the council of Laodicea; and for this he quotes the 11th canon of that council.* From what is said of Euodia and Syntyche, (Phil. iv. 3,) it is probable they were female presbyters. Perhaps also Priscilla, Tryphena, and Tryphosa, were of the same order, with some others, whom, in his epistle to the Romans, he salutes as "labouring in the Lord." (Rom. xvi. 3, 12.) For these reasons I think the apostle in 1 Tim. iii. 11, describes the qualifications, not of the deacons' wives, but of the women who, in the first age, were employed

* The canon is, "That priestesses, or women presidents, are not to be ordained in the church." By the superstition of after-times, these ladies were looked upon as a sort of sacred vestals. Pope Gregory II., in his first decree, curses the man who should dare to marry one of them.

by the church, to minister to the sick and afflicted, and to instruct the young of their own sex in the principles of the christian faith.

The primitive christians had private meetings for prayer, instruction, discipline, etc. Examples of each might be produced from the New Testament, but it is unnecessary. For many centuries, not only unbelievers were denied admission to these church meetings, but even the catechumens, or candidates for baptism, were forbid to be present at the prayers, and the celebration of the eucharist. In the private assemblies, the presbyters instructed the church; and, in meetings of the females, the presbyteresses "taught the young women." (Titus ii. 4.) Preaching to mixed congregations of believers and unbelievers, or of unbelievers only, was an office free to all.*

1 Timothy v. 17, instead of proving, as some have supposed, that labouring in the word and doctrine, was a part of the presbyter office, proves the contrary. For it is evident that, though all the presbyters ruled, only some of them preached; because the word "especially" distinguishes the preachers from the rest. But if the presbyter office included in it the public ministry of the word, the whole of them must have been preachers.

Though the Jews ordained their presbyters, both of the sanhedrim and synagogue, they gave full liberty to any person who chose, to preach. When our Lord went into the synagogue at Nazareth, on the Sabbath day, the minister politely handed to him the sacred book. He preached a most admirable sermon from Isaiah lxi. 1, 2; "and all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." (Luke iv. 16—22.) When Paul and Barnabas were in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, "after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye

* This will admit of a doubt, and the sentiment will not be easily reconciled with 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. On this point the author did not think with the Methodist body.—EDIT.

men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation to the people, say on. Then Paul stood up," and made an excellent discourse on the divinity of our Saviour's mission. (Acts xiii. 14, etc.) Though our Lord and his apostles were not ordained presbyters of the Jewish church, they were not denied the liberty of preaching even in the places of worship belonging to the national establishment. Much less were they told that, as dissenters, they could not be allowed to exercise their ministry in any place in the nation, till they had got it registered in the synagogue, and had taken oaths and signed declarations, in proof of their loyalty and orthodoxy. No; Jewish bigotry was modest! This zeal for the honour and purity of religion was left to the piety of christian princes, who have taught us that their toleration of divine worship is religious liberty!

In the days of the apostles, every christian, without any ordination, was at liberty to give religious instruction. Paul and Barnabas, though, perhaps, the two greatest preachers the church ever had, entered upon the ministry, as we have seen, without asking leave of either magistrates, bishops, priests, or deacons. Apollos was so fully instructed in the christian religion by Aquilla, and Priscilla, that, instead of finishing his education at a college, or waiting for orders from any man, or body of men whatever, he immediately assumed the sacred office, and "mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ." (Acts xviii. 24—28.)

The apostle James, writing to the twelve tribes which were scattered abroad, encouraged them to instruct the ignorant, and reform the wicked. "Brethren," says he, "if any of you do err from the truth, and any one * convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (James v. 19, 20.)

* Any one. See Macknight on the place.

In the church of Corinth, there were many gifted brethren who prophesied in their public assemblies. The apostle explained this term to mean exactly what we intend by preaching. "And he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." The gifted brethren were so numerous, that several of them addressed the congregation at the same time, which bred confusion. The apostle directed them, for the sake of order, to let one finish his oration before another commenced; and instead of restricting the privilege of preaching to a single individual episcopally ordained, which is the only order that modern hirelings can dream of; he gave them all full liberty to exercise their talents in rotation: "Ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." (1 Cor. xiv. 3—31.)

At the time when Stephen was stoned, "there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And they that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the word." (Acts viii. 1—4.) In that church, we are told, (Acts iv. 4,) "the number of the men was about five thousand." These were all scattered abroad, and went everywhere preaching. Great was the company of the preachers, when one church could send out five thousand. And great was the liberty of preaching, when all the men in a church might assume the office of the ministry. No wonder that christianity in those days triumphed over all opposition, and soon subdued millions to the obedience of faith.

Christians in general have not only a scriptural right to preach the gospel, but, according to their ability, it is their duty to do it.* "Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of

* Mr. Isaac on this point, went beyond the judgment of the Methodist body, in believing that every Christian man who has ability to preach, is called to do it.—EDIT.

some is ; but exhorting one another ; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. iii. 13 ; x. 25.) The apostle Peter commands every man who has the gift of preaching, to exercise it, according to his best ability, in explaining divine truth. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God ; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth ; that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter iv. 10, 11.) The apostle Paul exhorted the "saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse" to "let the word of Christ dwell in them richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another." (Col. iii. 16.) He also exhorted the Corinthians : "Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." (1 Cor. xiv. 1.) The Hebrews are severely censured for not making more rapid improvement in christian knowledge, that they might be able to teach others the doctrines of Christ. "For, when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God ; and have become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." (Heb. v. 12.)

When the apostle Paul was a prisoner at Rome, he rejoiced that "many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by his bonds, were much more bold to speak the word without fear." And though some of them did not preach from the purest motives, but laboured to make a party in opposition to him ; yet he did not charge them with heresy, schism, enthusiasm, and fanaticism, epithets which modern bigots are brawling out against dissenters till their throats are dry ; he did not call them unauthorised and unaccredited teachers, intruding into the sacred office ; he did not whine out a dolorous lamentation, "The church is in danger ;" nor did he forbid their preaching, or so much as suggest a hint that he possessed any such authority. No, he left this mean and contemptible

cant to his pretended successors ; his noble soul soared superior to the interests of a party ; he saw there was more work to be done than they all could accomplish, and he, therefore, wished success to the labours of the sectaries. His words upon this occasion, deserve to be written in letters of gold : " What then ? " says he, " Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached ; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." (Phil. i. 14—18.)

The practice of confining the work of religious instruction to a distinct order of men, has been more injurious to the interests of christianity than anything else. In the primitive times, when almost every christian understood his religion, and could teach it to others, believers were rapidly multiplied. Every member of the church felt interested in its prosperity, and exerted himself to serve it. Some laboured privately and from house to house, among their relations, friends and acquaintance ; if they could give but little instruction, they invited them to the public meetings to be taught the way of the Lord more perfectly ; others added to their private labours, a word of consolation, of advice, of reproof, in the assemblies of the faithful ; and others of superior acquirements, went out into the streets and lanes of the city, and preached to listening and inquiring multitudes, the unsearchable riches of Christ. Thus, Andrew brought his brother to Jesus. (John i. 40—42.) Cornelius " called together his kinsmen and near friends," to hear the preaching of Peter. (Acts x. 24, 25.) Matthew, the publican, made a great feast, and invited to it our Saviour, and all the publicans among his acquaintance, hoping they would be converted by his conversation. (Luke v. 27—32.) If an unbeliever came into the public assembly at Corinth, the gifted brethren were almost sure to catch him. " He was convinced of all, judged of all, the secrets of his heart were made manifest," and he lost all power of resistance ; " and so, falling down on his face, he worshipped God, and reported that God was among them of a truth." (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.) And

in the synagogues, the temples, and other places of public resort, the rustic eloquence of untutored plebeians converted thousands to the faith of Christ.

One man is now deemed sufficient to take the spiritual charge of a whole parish, which in some instances contains ten or twenty thousand inhabitants ; and all the religious instruction which he gives, is read over once a week, in about fifteen minutes, to perhaps two hundred of his parishioners ! Who can wonder that so little good is done ? The Methodists act upon the primitive plan, and call all the talent among them into exercise ; some pray in public, others exhort, others preach in villages, and the best qualified occupy the pulpits in the large towns and cities ; they have a rich variety of means and ministers ; multitudes are turned from the error of their ways, and the faithful are perfected in virtue.

Our lord and his apostles made the laity the guardians of orthodoxy. "Take heed that no man deceive you ; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Prove all things : hold fast that which is good. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." (Matt. xxiv. 4, 5 ; 1 John iv. 1 ; 1 Thes. v. 21 ; 2 John 10.)

The clergy, however, soon robbed the people of this privilege. They claimed the exclusive prerogative of judging what doctrines were true, and what were false ; they met together in synods and councils, to frame articles of faith, and rites, and ceremonies of worship ; and they required the people, on pain of eternal damnation, implicitly to receive their dogmas. There was no occasion now for the laity to read the Scriptures ; they were deprived of the right of private judgment, and were directed to look for their creed, not in the New Testament, but in the decrees of councils. To finish the business, the priests railed at the Bible as

an obscure book, which the laity could not understand, and, therefore, to avoid heresy, ought not to read. It was, consequently, taken away: the creed-makers had rendered it useless, and the clergy represented it as dangerous.

The way was thus prepared for the introduction of any thing and every thing which could promote the interest of the priesthood. It was no longer necessary to prove a single article of religion by either reason or scripture; dreams and visions, new revelations and miracles, supplied the place of both. The impure were seen burning in the flames of purgatory, and were heard to cry most piteously for a few more masses to help them out;—rusty nails and rotten wood, though corruptible themselves, could cure diseases and raise the dead, which made them of immense value;—images would weep and bleed, if not honoured with the offerings and devotions of the multitude;—and the priests wore at their girdles the golden keys of St. Peter, with which they could shut and open, at pleasure, the kingdom of heaven. The event has shown the wisdom of the founders of our religion in giving the people the right to judge, and the power to act, in religious matters; and has demonstrated their folly and wickedness, in resigning their privileges, and betraying their trust, into the hands of crafty and designing men.

The laity have no other interest in religion than the salvation of their souls, and therefore can be under no temptation to corrupt it. But the clergy have too often aimed at pomp, wealth, and power; and, as christianity is opposed to these, they have laboured to keep the people in ignorance, the more easily to secure their object; and this ignorance is pleaded as the reason why a distinct order of men should be supported to perform the services of the sanctuary, and dictate the opinions of the worshippers; like a physician who has injured the constitutions of his patients, and thereby rendered himself necessary to them as long as they live. Had they understood something of the

healing art, he would not have dared to give them pernicious drugs; their knowledge would have secured his honesty, and they might have profited by his prescriptions. A rogue will practise his impositions upon the ignorant; but he will be honest with the wise, through fear of detection.

If the ministry were open to all who choose to enter into it, Christendom would soon be blessed with pastors distinguished for piety, zeal, and learning; but till then the bulk of them must, from the nature of things, be ignorant, idle, and wicked.* The clergy pretend to be a distinct order of men from the laity, possessed of a divine right and independent power to do what they please in the church. Acting upon these principles, they have assumed the exclusive privilege of making clergymen; they have persuaded the state to deny the people the right of choosing them, and to compel the people to support them. Now, suppose such a system acted upon by any other craft than priestcraft, what would be the consequence? Suppose the tailors, for instance: these nimble-fingered gentlemen form themselves into a corporate body, and no one is allowed to make a pair of new breeches, or stop a hole in a pair of old ones, who has not served an apprenticeship to the trade, and been duly initiated into the order, by a master tailor, with the ceremony of putting a thimble upon his finger, and a goose into his hand. Every parish is provided with one of these state tailors, and obliged to support him in a genteel style, to keep up the credit and respectability of the order. Who is so blind as not to see that, upon this plan, we should be in danger of appearing in the streets in a birth-day suit? There is no competition. The livelihood of the man does not depend upon the quality or quantity of his work, or upon the good opinion of his employers. According to this scheme, we might have a corporation of gentlemen tailors, but we should have a nation in a state of nudity, or only clothed in rags.

* Is this opinion supported by facts?—EDIT.

This system might be defended by the same sort of logic which is employed by the clergy to support their pretensions. It is said, that a bishop must be a better judge of a minister's qualifications than Jack the ploughman; so a master tailor must be better able to appreciate the merits of one of his own profession, than a person who does not know a thimble from a nut shell. A regular bred clergyman must be more fit to minister in holy things, than he who, without such previous preparation, assumes the sacred office; and a person who has served a regular apprenticeship to the art of stitching, must be better qualified to make our clothes, than one who has been brought up to other employments. Once more: civil society cannot exist without religion, and therefore the state ought to support an order of ministers to teach it; and men cannot live in these northern climes without clothes, and therefore the state ought to support a corporation of tailors to make them.

When trade is open, the ignorant and idle will starve, and the wise and diligent will prosper. It is the same in religion; let the ministry be free to all,* and the christian world will soon be delivered from hunting, shooting, gaming, swearing, drunken parsons; for nobody will employ them, or contribute to their maintenance; and the consciousness of this will deter such characters from engaging in such an employment. Learning and virtue will be necessary to command crowded congregations and liberal support; and hence the candidates for the ministry, instead of paying court to patrons and prostitutes, will apply to their books and their God to qualify themselves for usefulness in the church.

The history of the church, in all ages, affords a practical illustration of the truth of these observations. Look at those countries where the established religion is the only one that is tolerated. Look at Spain and Portugal: what are the abilities and morals of the

* That is, to all whom God has called to it.—EDIT.

clergy? Is it possible to behold a more deformed picture of ignorance and vice combined? The only reason why things are not so bad in this country is the toleration of dissenters. Many attempts have been made to infringe upon the act of toleration, under the pretence that, the church is in danger; but as the alarmists have not been able to carry any measure of restriction, the clergy have been obliged to be more diligent in their labours, and circumspect in their conduct. The bishops have, of late, in their charges, loudly demanded of the clergy, an increased attention to the duties of their functions, and to the propriety of their deportment,—merely to counteract the influence of the sectaries, who are said to have assailed our most excellent church establishment. Hence some churches have been repaired, and others rebuilt; additional lectures have been set up, and a partial reformation has been effected; but the sole motive for all this, according to the confession of the parties themselves, has been a spirit of opposition to the dissenters. Were the act of toleration to be repealed, the clergy would be secure in their indolence, and have no stimulus to exertion; in which case, it is not saying too much to affirm, that the nation would soon relapse into a state of the most deplorable ignorance, and brutal barbarism.

Sozomen informs us, that there was no preaching in the church of Rome;* and though Leo introduced the practice, it soon declined, and was discontinued for five hundred years together, till Pius Quintus revived it again. Neal has shown at large in his history that, under the reigns of Elizabeth and the Stuarts, the bishops laboured to keep the people in ignorance; and, therefore, persecuted with uncommon zeal, those ministers who endeavoured to enlighten them by their preaching. And, in the present day, those ministers who preach most frequently are opposed with the greatest violence. Because an itine-

* Sozomen, lib. vii., cap. 19.

rant preaches twice or thrice as many sermons as a stated pastor, every possible effort is made to stop his mouth. Almost every lazy drone can rouse his sluggish powers to declaim against the wandering tribe of fanatics, who compass sea and land to make proselytes.

Ordination was never deemed necessary to a preacher till within a few years past.* Bingham observes, "that Origen was approved by Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, and Theoctistus of Cæsarea, to preach and expound the scriptures publicly in the church, when he was only a layman. And when Demetrius of Alexandria, made a remonstrance against this, as an innovation that had never been seen or heard of before, that a layman should preach to the people in the presence of bishops; Alexander replied in a letter, and told him he was much mistaken; for it was an usual thing in many places, when men were well qualified to edify the brethren, for bishops to entreat them to preach to the people: As Euelpis was requested by Neon at Laranda, and Paulinus by Celsus at Iconium, and Theodorus by Atticus at Synada. Hallier, a famous Sorbon doctor, is of opinion that they might do it by permission; and he thinks this may be deduced from that canon of the fourth council of Carthage, which forbids a layman to teach in the presence of the clergy, except they request him to do it. The ancient author of the comment upon the epistles, under the name of St. Ambrose, says that, in the beginning of christianity, for the augmentation and increase of the church, a general commission was granted unto all, both to preach the gospel, and baptize, and explain the scriptures in ecclesiastical assemblies."† The monks, who were only laymen, preached publicly in the churches very frequently.

Our reformers admitted the lawfulness of ordination, but denied its necessity. Cranmer delivered it as his

* This assertion appears to be too sweeping, if we look either into the New Testament, or at the practice of many christian churches.—EDIT.

† Bingham's Antiquities, book xiv., chap. iv., sect. iv.

deliberate judgment, in answer to some queries upon the subject, that, "In the apostles' time, when there were no christien princes, by whose authority ministers of God's word might be appointed, nor synnes by the sword corrected; there was no remedy then for the correction of vice, or appointinge of ministers, but only the consent of christien multitude amonge themselves, by an uniform consent to follow the advice and persuasion of such persons, whom God had most endued with the spirit of wisdom and counsaile. And at that time, forasmuch as christien people had no sword nor governor among them, thei were constrained of necessity to take such curates and priests, as either they knew themselves to be meete thereunto, or else as were commended unto them by other, that were so replete with the Spirit of God, with such knowledge in the profession of Christ, such wisdom, such conversation and counsell, that they ought, even of very conscience, to give credit unto them, and to accept such as by theym were presented. And so some tyme the apostles and other unto whom God had given abundantly his Spirit, sent or appointed ministers of God's word, sometime the people did choose such as they thought meete thereunto. And when any were appointed or sent by the apostles or other, the people, of their owne voluntary will, with thanks did accept them; not for the supremitie, imperie, or dominion that the apostells had over them, to command as their princes, or masters; but as good people, readie to obey the advice of good counsellors, and to accept any thing that was necessary for their edification and benefit.

"The bishops and priests were one at that time, and were not two things, but both one office in the beginning of Christ's religion.

"A bishop may make a priest by the scriptures, and so may princes and govenours alsoe, and that by the auctorite of God committed them, and the people also by their election. For as we read that bishops have done it, so christien emperors and princes usually

have done it. And the people before christien princes were, commonly did elect their bishops and priests.

“In the New Testament, he that is appointed to be a bishop or a priest, needeth no consecration by the scripture; for election or appointing thereto is sufficient.”*

Pope Alexander VI. granted to the University of Cambridge the privilege of licensing twelve ministers yearly, to preach anywhere throughout England, for life, without obtaining licenses from any of the bishops; † and several colleges in both universities oblige masters of arts, whether in orders or not, to take a text and formally preach from it in their chapels. ‡ Fuller informs us that, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, “Mr. Tavernour of Water-Eaton, in Oxfordshire, high sheriff of the county, came, in pure charity, not ostentation, and gave the scholars a sermon in St. Mary’s, with his gold chain about his neck, and his sword by his side, beginning with these words: ‘Arriving at the mount of St. Mary’s, in the stony stage, || where I now stand, I have brought you some fine biscuits, baked in the oven of charity, and carefully conserved for the chickens of the church, the sparrows of the Spirit, and the sweet swallows of salvation.’”§ The clergy of the university must have been very learned, when a layman is employed to preach such stuff as this to the students under their care. In those days, however, we see that laymen were permitted to preach, and to preach even in churches and before universities. Sheriff Tavernour would cut nearly as great a dash with his gold chain about his neck, and his sword by his side, as doctors do, when decked out with bands, and gowns, and aprons.

It is quite inconsistent in the clergy to plead for the

* Stillingfleet Iren., part. ii., chap. viii., page 391, 392.

† Neal’s Purit., vol. i., chap. 4.

‡ Rights of Christian Church, chap. ix., p. 349.

|| A stone pulpit.

§ Fuller’s Church History of Brit., b. ix., p. 65.

necessity of ordination to the governors of the church, and to all its officers, when the matter of fact is, that those who have the chief authority in the church of England are laymen. Legislation, which in every society is the supreme power, is not lodged in the bishops, but in the king and parliament. The bishops cannot make a single law, nor have they even a negative upon the legislative body. Nearly all the bishops voted for lord Sidmouth's bill, but it was lost; and nearly all the bishops voted against the bill which transferred the supremacy from the pope to Hen. VIII., but it was carried. The bishops are not even at the head of the executive power of the church. The king is supreme head; he has the nomination of all the bishops; and their lordships would incur all the penalties of a *premunire*, were they to deny consecration to the bishop elect. The clergy cannot meet together in convocation without the king's permission; nor are their canons obligatory without his sanction; and even then they bind none but the clergy, till they receive the authority of law from the parliament. The same authorities that employ ecclesiastics can put them out of office, just the same as a master, when he pleases, can dismiss a servant. Thus, at the reformation, the civil power put down various orders of monks, friars, etc. Queen Elizabeth deprived all the popish bishops, and this act was declared good and valid by the parliament.* It is as absurd in the church to consecrate the subordinate authorities, and deny the sacred rite to the supreme, as it would be in the state to crown justices and constables, instead of the sovereign. Either bishops, priests, and deacons, ought not to be or-

* 39 Eliz. c. 8. The case of a woman being supreme head of the church of England, and making and unmaking bishops at pleasure, is humbly submitted to the consideration of those clerical buffoons, who make themselves and others so merry at the expense of the Methodists and the Quakers, because they employ ladies as preachers. The Methodists suffer very few females to teach in their public assemblies, and allow them no authority in church government.

dained at all, or holy hands ought not to be withheld from kings and parliaments.

If Jesus Christ committed the government of the church to bishops exclusively, with a divine and independent right to exercise authority over it, then it must be impiety and sacrilege in kings and parliaments to invade their prerogatives. Upon these principles, bishops may legislate for the church, annex penalties to their laws, and appoint courts, judges, and officers to carry them into execution; they may excommunicate kings, and forbid the faithful to hold any communication with them, or to obey them; they may interdict all public worship, and play over again the abominable tricks of the popes, laugh at human authority, and plead that they are only responsible to that God for the exercise of their power who entrusted them with it.

If it be replied, that the divine right extends no further than to the execution of the laws of Christ; it is asked, who is to judge when the clergy exceed their commission? If themselves; it must be recollected that they have been infallible for more than a thousand years, and consequently have never exceeded their powers. The protestant clergy are about as impeccable as the Romish. Archbishop Parker, in the days of queen Elizabeth, refused to make any alterations in the church service in favour of the puritans, lest it should be said, that the church of England had erred! And when the archbishop crowns the king he makes him swear, that he will maintain the church of England as by law established, which his grace surely would not do, if he could see in her a single corruption or imperfection. In fact there never was a pope wished for more power than to do what was right in his own eyes. The church has pleaded divine authority, to bind her kings with chains, and her nobles with fetters of iron. If the laity are to judge, then they can increase or diminish the power of the clergy as they see fit; and this conveyance of spiritual power by the people, reduces the ceremonies of ordination to mere farce.

It has been shown, that the apostles ordained no spiritual* officers but presbyters, and that, in churches which they could not personally visit, they advised aged, grave, and sober men to assume this office. They have said nothing about the necessity of ordination, nor who are to perform it, nor what rites and ceremonies are to be used in it; from which we may justly infer, that it is a matter of no great moment. Some indeed have contended, that Acts xiv. 23, should be rendered, "And when they had ordained presbyters by the suffrages of the people." In the old English Bible it is rendered thus: "And when they had ordained them elders by election." But Dr. Campbell has proved, in a very satisfactory manner, that, "the common import of the word, *cheirotone-santes*, is no more than 'to constitute,' 'ordain,' or

* The deacons of the primitive church were not spiritual officers. The occasion of their appointment at first was this: in the distribution of the alms of the church among poor widows, the Hellenists (that is, the Jews who spoke the Greek language, and were strangers at Jerusalem) complained that their widows were neglected. To remedy this inconvenience, "The twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, etc., whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." Serving tables, which was the business of the deacons, is here opposed to the ministry of the word; the ordination of a deacon, therefore, cannot possibly be an ordination to the ministry;—it is properly an ordination to the office of overseer of the poor. The clergy would have more scripture on their side, were they to insist that none can be qualified to relieve the needy who are not episcopally ordained, by persons who can trace their spiritual descent from the apostles, than they have when they make a ceremonious consecration necessary to a preacher of the gospel. It will avail nothing to say, that Stephen and Philip were both preachers afterwards; for this ordination, we are expressly told, was to the business of serving tables. Every overseer of the poor has a right to preach the gospel, if he can, as well as Stephen and Philip.

‘appoint’ any how.”* The imposition of hands is considered, by almost all parties, as necessary to an ordination. But though we read of the apostles laying hands on persons recently baptized, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, and on the overseers of the poor, when elected to serve tables, we nowhere read of laying on of hands at the ordination of presbyters. The modesty of bishops has permitted them to usurp the exclusive prerogatives of Jesus Christ, and to say, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost;” they ought therefore to convey this invaluable gift, by the same ceremony which he used, and instead of imposition of hands, they should breathe upon the candidates for holy orders.†

Objection: “The apostle exhorts Timothy to ‘lay hands suddenly on no man.’” (1 Tim. v. 22.) He does; but he is not there speaking on the ordination of ministers, but on the exercise of church discipline upon offenders: “Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear.” And as using the rod is a very ungrateful task, and to use it judiciously a very difficult task, the apostle exhorted Timothy to discharge this duty faithfully and impartially: “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.” The injunction immediately follows, “Lay hands suddenly on no man;” which, as it is connected with the exercise of discipline, undoubtedly relates to it. Timothy had now been at Ephesus long enough to be intimately acquainted with the brethren; there could, therefore, be no reason why he should defer ordaining presbyters for that church, if any were wanted; but there were the strongest reasons why he

* Preliminary Dissertation x., part v., sect. vii.

† Certainly this attack on all truly christian bishops might well have been spared, as Titus i. 5—7, compared with 1 Tim. v. 22, clearly shows that men were ordained by the laying on of hands to be elders and bishops: and no such overseers will pretend either to have right or power to give the Holy Ghost. — EDIT.

should not suddenly take off church censures, and restore the immoral to the privileges of the faithful; (which was done in the primitive church by the imposition of hands;) for this, instead of making others fear, and thereby operating as a restraint upon them, would have exposed discipline to ridicule, and emboldened transgressors. In such a case, Timothy would have been implicated in their guilt; on which account it is added, "Neither be partakers of other men's sins; keep thyself pure."

It is not denied that the members of the church of England have a right to model their church as they please, provided they do not infringe upon the rights of other christian churches; but when they call their own "the most pure and apostolic church in Christendom," and pronounce all other churches heretical and schismatic, which the state ought to watch with an eye of suspicion, it is high time to humble their pretensions and expose their extravagance. All the churches in this country have omitted some things which were deemed important by the primitive christians, and have added others for which they can find no authority in the New Testament. The apostle Paul required women to wear a veil in the church, instituted an order of deaconesses, and commanded christians to salute one another with an holy kiss. One of our Lord's last commands to the apostles, was to wash one another's feet; and James commanded the presbyters to anoint the sick with oil. What church attends to all these things, or supposes the observance of them to be of perpetual obligation? And who can find in the New Testament, archbishops, archdeacons, deans, proctors, surrogates, prebends, chancellors, etc.? We have seen that, in constituting churches, the apostles were guided by circumstances; they admitted of diversity, and never dreamed about uniformity: hence in some churches they appointed presbyters, in others they advised the aged to assume the office, in others they left the exercise of discipline to all the members in a general meeting; and the office of the

ministry they left free to all. A few grains of common sense, and the spirit of christianity, are better guides in these matters, than all the infallible priests the church has ever produced.

Upon the principles laid down and established in this essay, most, if not all, of the sects in this country may defend their church order. That class of officers in the Wesleyan societies, denominated leaders, have been more objected to than any description of officers in any other community. These leaders answer to the presbyter bishops of the primitive christians, in the following particulars:—

First. One duty of the presbyter office is to feed the flock. This the leaders do, by giving instruction, advice, and counsel, in their class meetings.

Secondly. Another duty of the presbyter office is to oversee, or rule the church, and this is done by the Methodist leaders. They are well acquainted with their flocks, and give them directions as to their christian deportment. The leader's meeting has power to admit and exclude members, to elect new leaders, to inflict church censures on the immoral, and to make new regulations for the particular society to which they belong, provided these do not infringe upon the general rules of the body.

Thirdly. The presbyters were subject to the evangelists, or itinerant preachers, such as Timothy and Titus. And the Methodist leaders are subject to the itinerant preachers.

Fourthly. There were several presbyters in every church of any magnitude; and there are many leaders in all the principal societies. The epistle to the church of Philippi is inscribed to all the saints, with the bishops and deacons. Nothing, perhaps, has more puzzled the advocates for diocesan episcopacy, than the circumstance of finding, in the New Testament, a plurality of bishops over a single congregation. The episcopalians, who understand all mysteries, have ascertained the precise number of bishops which governed the church of Philippi; they,

of course, reduce the plurality to two. It is certain, however, that there were more than two bishops in the church of Ephesus. The apostle, in addressing them, says, "all of you." It is proper to say to two persons, "Both of you;" but ridiculous to say, "All of you." But what necessity for even two bishops over a few christians in one city, when one of our lord bishops thinks himself quite sufficient to oversee many hundreds of congregations? To explain this mystery, they tell us, that the Jews and Gentiles were divided into separate churches in the same city or town, and that a bishop was appointed over each. But how could the apostle Paul countenance this, when he publicly reproved Peter for withdrawing with the Jewish converts from the communion of the Gentiles? To remove this difficulty, they pretend that this public reproof was only a juggling trick, contrived by the apostles themselves, to sooth the resentment of the Gentiles at the haughty behaviour of the Jews; thus they sacrifice the integrity of these men of God, to justify their own lordly importance.

Fifthly. Some of the presbyters, we have seen, were preachers; and so are some of the Methodist leaders.

Sixthly. An order of female presbyters was instituted by the apostles, whose office it was to "teach the young women." To these answer the female leaders, whose business it is to instruct those of their own sex.

This coincidence is the more remarkable, as it probably never occurred to Mr. Wesley, and the preachers who assisted him in the constitution of the Methodist societies, that in making leaders, and in fixing their powers and duties, they were creating an order of church officers similar to the presbyter bishops of the first christians; but this shows how naturally good men, acting under the influence of the same religious principles, are led to adopt the same plans.

As the subject of ordination, by the imposition of hands, has recently engaged the attention of many of

the Methodist preachers, it may not be amiss to observe, that, if it be introduced into the connexion, the leaders, or presbyters, are the proper subjects of it, and not the preachers; because there are a few examples in the New Testament of ordination to the presbyter office, but none whatever of ordination to the work of the ministry.* There can be no serious objection, it is presumed, to initiate the leaders, both male and female, into office by the imposition of hands; but, since there is no scripture evidence to countenance the use of this ceremony in the ordination of presbyters; and since "it is easier," as one of the preachers has wittily remarked in a late publication, "to put hands upon a person's head, than to put mental qualifications into it," it is humbly submitted to their consideration, whether it would not be the wisest measure to keep their hands to themselves.

ESSAY III.

ON THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND POWERS OF THE CLERGY.

Most churchmen are of opinion that Jesus Christ entrusted the Holy Ghost to the custody of bishops, with an exclusive power of communicating his spiritual gifts to the clergy, for the edification of the faithful; and that the ministrations of those who receive the episcopal benediction are full of spirit and life. These opinions cannot be supported, if the uninterrupted succession cannot be proved. For, admitting an interruption, it will follow, that wherever the succession failed, there the Spirit was lost; the next bishop, after the chain was broken, was either self-constituted, or appointed by those who had not the Spirit to give; and, in either case, his ministrations and ordinations

* This, as we have seen in a previous note, is a doubtful, if not a groundless assertion.—EDIT.

must have been nugatory. As the succession, therefore, has been disproved, the pretensions of the clergy must fall to the ground. But since they will not easily be persuaded that they possess no exclusive supernatural authority, we must take the trouble of investigating the particulars in which it is supposed to exist.

SECTION I.

ON THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ORDINATION.

At the ordination of a priest, the bishop, laying his hands on the head of the candidate, says, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the church of God, committed to thee by the imposition of our hands." There is some controversy among churchmen about the meaning of these words. The moderate party insists, that it is the office, and not the divine Spirit, which is given by the imposition of hands; and that the words, "Receive the Holy Ghost," are to be understood as a pious wish or prayer.

If this explanation be admitted, it is reasonable to inquire, why any other person may not perform the ceremony of ordination just as well as a bishop? No text of scripture can be quoted, which vests in bishops an exclusive power of making ministers. After paying the highest complements to episcopal piety, I hope it will not be deemed presumption to affirm, that the prayers of a whole congregation for the inspiration of the pastor of their choice, may possibly be as successful, as the prayers of a bishop for the inspiration of a priest; and, if this be granted, it cannot well be denied, that the ordinations of dissenters are as valid as those of churchmen.*

* Though I have modestly put the case upon the supposition that a single bishop may have as much interest with the Almighty, as a whole congregation of the people, because my argument required no more, I am not insensible, that some of the sacred order have been quite as much in love with some other things as with prayer books.

The general sentiment, however, is, that the bishop confers the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands ; and it must be confessed, this seems to be the plain and obvious meaning of the words. The phrase, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," is addressed to the candidate, not to God ; and, instead of expressing a wish, is imperative. It is scarcely credible, that the greatest dunce would employ such terms, either in prayer to heaven, or in wishes to a friend. All the advocates for the succession, lodge the power of giving the Holy Ghost, in the hands of the bishops, and this high authority is generally claimed by their lordships, and admitted by their admirers.

It is quite natural to suppose, that bishops would

Theophilact, patriarch of Constantinople, "who sold every ecclesiastical benefice as soon as it became vacant, had in his stable above two thousand hunting horses, which he fed with pignuts, pistachios, dates, dried grapes, figs steeped in the most exquisite wines, to all which he added the richest perfumes. One holy Thursday, as he was celebrating high mass, his groom brought him the joyful news that one of his favourite mares had foaled ; upon which he threw down the liturgy, left the church, and ran in raptures to the stable, where having expressed his joy at that grand event, he returned to the altar to finish the divine service, which he had left interrupted during his absence."—MOSHEIM'S *Eccles. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 400, note [o], edit. 1803.

The following advertisement, which appeared in Jackson's Oxford Journal, is a proof that something of this pious disposition still exists in the minds of some of the holy tribe :—

"NEXT PRESENTATION.

"To be sold by Auction, by Hoggart and Phillips, at the Auction Mart, opposite the Bank of England, on Thursday next, the 11th day of April, 1811, at twelve o'clock,—The next presentation to a most valuable living, in one of the first sporting counties: the vicinity affords the best coursing in England, also excellent fishing, an extensive cover for game, and numerous packs of fox hounds, harriers, etc. It is half an hour's ride from one of the first cities, and not far distant from several most fashionable watering places. The surrounding country is beautiful and healthy, and the society elegant and fashionable.

"The incumbent is about fifty years of age," etc.

Alas! that there should be any room to advert to a fact so disgraceful to the church of England, or to any church.—EDIT.

not affect such powers, if they had not the clearest warrant of holy scripture to support them. Let us then proceed to investigate this subject.

Considerable stress is laid upon Matthew xxviii. 19, 20: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Now, in the name of common sense, what does this text say about bishops, ordination, or the subjection of the Spirit to the will of man? The words contain a precept, to teach all nations, as well as a promise of the divine presence; and it is only in the discharge of the duty, that the privilege can be enjoyed. Our Lord does not engage to be with them if they stay at home, and live in ease and luxury. Our bishops do not go and teach all nations; they do not even teach our own nation, but leave this work to others; they have therefore nothing to do with the promise.

There is a promise to the full as strong as this, made to every christian, in Hebrews xiii. 5: "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Does this gracious declaration authorise every pious man, or woman, to ordain ministers for the church, and inspire them with the Holy Ghost?

Another text is John xiv. 16, 17: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth." This promise is prefaced with a condition: "Keep my commandments, and I will pray," etc. Wicked priests have, therefore, no interest in this passage; it concerns those only who move in the path of obedience. But, further, it is not said that this heavenly Comforter is given by bishops, but by God. This promise is extended in the following verses to all christians generally: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If a man love

me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Private christians are as much interested in these promises as priests, and either both, or neither, of the parties are authorised by them, to impart the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Some have supposed that the promise of Christ, to be with the apostles "always, even to the end of the world," was not made to the men, who all died soon after, but to the apostolic office, which was to continue to the end of time. For the same reason the other promise (John xiv. 16, 17) must be interpreted in the same manner. Here is a difficulty, how an office can be a recipient of promises; and, particularly, how an office can be comforted! By parity of reason, the general promises of divine support and consolation are not made to christians, but to the profession of christianity; the profession is to be strengthened, and the profession is to be comforted! By uniting the divine presence to the office instead of the man, an objection to the validity of the ministrations of wicked priests is answered. Christ is in the office, and, therefore, the service is efficacious, though the devil be in the officer! * With equal propriety it may be affirmed,

* Some persons, not much read in church divinity, will suspect, if no authority be produced, that the author is speaking here without book. Bishop Beveridge, in his sermon on Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, applies the promise to the apostolic office; and, on that ground, apologises for the ministrations of wicked priests. But to give a modern instance: The Rev. Henry Phillpots, rector of Gateshead, vicar of Bishop-Middleham, and domestic chaplain to the bishop of Durham, in a sermon preached before the bishop of St. David's, at the consecration of a new church at Wall's-end, in the year 1809, avows these sentiments: "It was to the office apostolical, that this great promise was made. This then is the office, to which the promise of our Lord was made, that, 'He would be with it always, even unto the end of the world;' with it, that is, not so as peculiarly to favour the persons of those that are invested with it, but so as to make the office itself effectual to the great purposes for which it was constituted. For them, [the ministers,] it is very possible, that they may be themselves cast-aways, and yet that they may be humble instruments in God's hand, to communicate the saving

that the profession of christianity, as being the subject of christian promises, will be saved, though the professors, as being destitute of personal virtue, will be damned !

No scripture is of private interpretation. Jehovah said to Moses, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." (Exod. xxxiii. 14.) This promise was not limited to Moses, or to an order of prophets like unto himself; the whole of the Israelites enjoyed the divine presence, as well as their leader. The reason is, Moses was the representative of the Jewish church, and therefore the promises which belonged to the whole congregation were made to him. The same remark applies to the apostles. They were the representatives of the christian church, and therefore the promises of the presence of Christ, and the comforts of his Spirit, for ever, though made to the apostles, belong to all believers in all ages.

The strength of the cause rests upon John xx. 22 : "He breathed on them, and said unto them, receive ye the holy Ghost." This could not be an ordination to the apostleship, for they had been in office upwards of three years. Our Lord did not give the Holy Ghost to the apostles by imposition of hands, but by breathing upon them; and he does not say a word about their being empowered to confer this heavenly gift upon others. This text, therefore, affords no

knowledge of his truth to thousands. It is not personal holiness, it is not even zeal for God's honour, and for the salvation of men, (how much soever it may be the bounden duty of ministers to pray and labour after those graces; and how tremendous soever may be the danger to ourselves, if we miss obtaining them.) yet it is not that holiness, nor that zeal, which, of themselves, can make any ministerial service of the slightest avail." If this be true, only put the devil into office, and he will make as good a parson as the very best of you ! The inhabitants of Wall's-end would understand the reason of this apology; but strangers will think it ill-timed: Their reverences were met together to make the building holy, and the ground around it holy; at such a time the people might naturally expect to hear something about a holy priesthood ! but with some churchmen, places *must* be sacred, and priests *may* be profane.

support to the practice of modern prelates, unless they take it for granted, that they are authorised to do everything which Jesus Christ did; and in that case, they have power to open the eyes of the blind, and to raise the dead.

Let us next inquire, whether the apostles ever pretended to impart the Holy Ghost to others. Two texts (Acts viii. 15—17; xix. 6) are usually referred to. In the first we find that Peter and John visited the converts at Samaria, and “prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” The circumstance of the apostles praying to God to give the divine Spirit, is positive evidence that he was not at their disposal. There would have been just as much propriety in supplicating the supreme Being to lay on hands, as to give the Holy Ghost, if they themselves were to do both. The other text is nothing to the purpose: “When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them.” But it is not so much as hinted that Paul either gave or pretended to give this valuable gift. This was not an ordination to the ministry, because it was not a select number, but the whole church, which received the imposition of hands, and the gift of the Spirit. In both these cases, the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were communicated: “Simon saw that, through laying on of the apostle’s hands, the Holy Ghost was given” to the Samaritans, which he could not have done had the ordinary gifts only been imparted; and it is said of the Ephesians, that “they spake with tongues and prophesied.” But these are gifts which our bishops do not possess, and, therefore, cannot transfer. There was no ordination to the ministry in either case, (and it is to none but ministers, that bishops pretend to give the Holy Ghost,) as these christians had only been recently baptized; and even churchmen quote these texts in support of confirmation.

Thus we have seen that there is neither precept nor example in the whole of the New Testament, to coun-

tenance the practice of one christian minister pretending to give the Spirit of God to another. Does it follow from the nature of things, that the Holy Ghost, like worldly goods, may be transferred from one to another at pleasure? If so, a private christian may give the Holy Ghost just as well as a bishop. The apostle Peter informed the three thousand who were pricked to the heart on the day of Pentecost, that on their repenting and submitting to christian baptism, they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. He goes on to comment upon this promise thus: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii. 38, 39.) When our Lord breathed on the apostles, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," he was silent concerning their successors; but the promise of the apostle to private christians, extends to their children, and runs on in a descending series to the latest period of the church. Private christians have, therefore, a better right to lay hands on their children, and say, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," than bishops have to act the same farce over priests. Had our Lord added, in his address to the apostles, "For the gift is to you, and your children, or immediate successors, and to all future generations of episcopally ordained ministers, even as many as the Lord our God shall call to the priesthood," we should be stunned to death with the clamour of priests, about the divine Spirit being subjected to their power. It would be deemed impious and blasphemous in a parent, who should affect to communicate the Holy Ghost through the laying on of his hands on the heads of his children; and it must be as bad, or worse, in a minister of religion, who ought to know better, to assume any such authority over the Holy One of Israel.

None but the heart-searching God can know who are proper to receive the Spirit for the work of the ministry. A bishop who has no means of ascertaining the motives which influence a candidate for holy

orders, will as soon give the Holy Ghost to a Simon Magus, as to an apostle ; and with his perfect ignorance of the secret working of the human mind, to assume the privilege of disposing, to whom he pleases, of one of the sacred persons in the Godhead, is shockingly profane.

But there is no contradicting facts. The bishops do not give the Holy Ghost. They do not confer his extraordinary gifts ; for neither the ordainer nor the ordained can speak with tongues, or discern spirits, or work miracles. They do not confer his ordinary gifts ; for they neither regenerate their priests, nor shed the love of God abroad in their hearts, nor impel them forwards in the paths of holy obedience. It is as foolish, therefore, as it is wicked to make such pretensions.

If we are to judge from the conduct of the bishops, they have got the Spirit completely in their power. He is permitted to excite some inward motions in deacons ; but they have not a sufficient measure of his influence to enable them to absolve the sick, and administer the Lord's supper ! When they receive priests' orders, they are favoured with another portion of his influence ; but still they have not enough to qualify them to govern the church ; much less have they any to spare to give to others ; hence presbyter ordination is deemed good for nothing ! The Holy Ghost must, therefore, be received a third time, to qualify for the office and work of a bishop. No text of scripture is quoted to support the practice of giving the Spirit of God by piece-meal in this way ; and it is altogether indefensible, except as necessary to uphold a monstrous system of priestcraft. Some religious ceremonies may be laughed at for their foolishness ; but when the divine Spirit is halved and quartered in such a manner, the shocking impiety of the thing must excite, in every virtuous breast, a struggle betwixt terror and indignation.

If it were supposed possible to receive the Holy Ghost immediately from God, in answer to prayer, it

would be unnecessary to apply to a bishop. It will, therefore, avail high churchmen nothing to prove merely, that the apostle conferred the Holy Spirit, and authorised their successors to do the same, (though it is shown that they can prove neither,) except they can also make it appear, contrary to the express words of scripture, that our "heavenly Father will" not "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him;" because if God has reserved to himself the power of answering the prayers of his people, a dissenter may possibly be as successful by supplication to a throne of grace, as a churchman by kneeling devoutly to a bishop.

The authority of the reformers will weigh more with some people, than either scripture or reason. Cranmer gives his judgment upon this point in the following words: "In the admission of many of these officers (of the church) bee divers comely ceremonies and solemnities used, which be not of necessity, but only for a goodly order and semely fashion. For if such offices and ministrations were committed without such solemnitye, that were nevertheles truly committed. And there is no more promise of God, that grace is given in the committing of the ecclesiastical office, then it is the committing of the cyvile."* These sentiments are christian. Use as many ceremonies as you please — lay on holy hands, breathe holy breath, etc. Only allow that these things are not necessary, and do not unchristian those who have so much film upon their eyes, that they cannot perceive them to be quite so comely, as they appear to your view. The apostles put the overseers of the poor into office by the imposition of hands; and the same, or other ceremonies may be used in conferring other offices. Let it be allowed, that you can give as much grace to an excise-man, or to a constable, as a bishop can to a priest, and the sentiment is candid and admissible. By the by, it is a pity that ceremonious ordination to civil offices is not more frequent; it might make the ordinations of bishops more cheap!

* Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, part ii., chap. 8, p. 391.

Nelson says, that, "the words, 'Receive thou the Holy Ghost,' etc., are in none of the ancient rituals."* In fact, there is no evidence whatever that the clergy affected to give the Spirit before the thirteenth century; but when they had claimed the titles, it is no wonder that they usurped the prerogatives of the supreme Being.

In the primitive church, the presbyters were ordained by imposition of hands and prayer, and every bishop used what form of prayer he pleased on the occasion. The only form preserved in the Constitutions† runs in these words: "Look, O Lord, upon this thy servant, who is chosen into the presbytery by the suffrage and judgment of all the clergy, and fill him with the spirit of grace and counsel, that he may help and govern thy people with a pure heart. In like manner, as thou hadst respect to thy chosen people, commanding Moses to make choice of elders, whom thou didst replenish with thy Spirit. And now, Lord, do the same thing, preserving in us the never-failing spirit of thy grace; that he, being full of healing powers and instructive discourse, may with meekness teach thy people, and serve thee sincerely, with a pure mind, and willing soul, and unblamably perform the sacred services for thy people, through Christ," etc.

The form used at the ordination of bishops was in these words: "Grant to him, O Lord Almighty, by thy Christ, the communication of the Holy Spirit," etc.‡

In these instances, it is clear enough that the ordainers had no idea that they possessed a power of conferring the Spirit of God; they besought his influence from heaven, perfectly unconscious that it resided in their own hands. Not a single trace can be found of prelates pretending to confer the Holy Ghost, for the first twelve hundred years. Our English

* Rights of the Clergy. Art. Ordination.

† Constit. Apost., lib. viii., chap. 16.

‡ Constit. Apost., lib. viii., chap. 5.

form of ordination, it is well known, is taken from the Roman pontifical. After all the talk, therefore, of Jesus Christ giving bishops a power to confer the Holy Spirit, their authority is derived, not from the gospel according to the evangelists, but from the gospel according to the popes.

SECTION II.

ON CONFIRMATION.

IN the ceremony of confirmation, a bishop lays his hands upon the heads of young people, and assures them that this holy touch is a sign to certify them of the gracious goodness of God towards them. But how the imposition of a bishop's hands can be any sign, evidence, proof, or confirmation, to any one, of the divinity of the christian religion, and of his own personal, saving interest in it, is a "mystery of godliness" which will require all the sagacity of his lordship to explain. It must be noted, that no virtue is necessary in order to enjoy this sacred and soul-reviving sign. The only qualifications required of candidates for confirmation are, that they be able to "say the creed, the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, answer the other questions in the short catechism," and promise to be very good for the future. These things being duly certified to the bishop, without a single inquiry being made into their past conduct, he prays, "Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins," etc., and then proceeds to lay his hands upon them, which he assures them is a sign of the gracious goodness of God towards them. Thus, churchmen may be pardoned, sanctified, and assured of their acceptance, without having paid any attention to the moral precepts of the gospel.

The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit which followed

the laying on of the hands of the apostles, were a confirmation to the first christians that their religion was of God. But what confirmation can the imposition of a bishop's hands be of the divine original of christianity, when no sensible influence of the Spirit follows the use of the rite? If a professor of astronomy, should undertake to demonstrate the truth of the Copernican system, by laying his hands on the heads of students, the man would be deemed fit for a strait jacket.

The laying on of hands was performed by the apostles immediately after baptism; (Acts viii. 14—17; xix. 5, 6;) and this practice obtained in the church for many centuries; hence infants were confirmed as well as adults. "The custom ought to have been laid aside when the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit ceased; and it is as ridiculous to continue it now, as it would be for bishops to stretch themselves upon dead persons, because a prophet and an apostle used this ceremony in restoring the dead to life.

Confirmation was soon magnified far above baptism, and many most ridiculous ceremonies were added to it, to command the reverence of the superstitious. A compound of oil and balsam, called chrism, was consecrated by the bishop, and with this he anointed the forehead and other parts of the body. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, tells those who were baptized, that "they were first anointed in the forehead, to wipe away that shame which the first man by his transgression had contracted; and that they might now with open face behold the glory of the Lord. Then they were anointed on the ears, that they might have ears to hear the divine mysteries. After that on the nose and breast, that they might be a sweet savour unto the Lord, and being armed with the breast-plate of righteousness, might be able to withstand all the insults of the devil." (Cyril. Catech. Myst. iii., c. 3.) Baptism, without all this nonsense, was supposed to be incomplete; hence the author of the Constitution represents a person who has been baptized, but not confirmed, as no better than a Jew; he has put away the filth of the body by water, but is

not purified from the pollution of the soul by the Spirit.*

When dioceses were enlarged, and the pastors of the church became lord bishops, a custom obtained in many places for presbyters to use the unction. This was founded upon necessity; for the people were taught that they could not be saved without confirmation; and yet, on account of the absence of the bishop, many died without receiving it, which was a most distressing circumstance to the ignorant and superstitious. The bishops, however, reserved to themselves the sole power of making the greasy composition holy, and the presbyters applied to them before Easter for the consecrated chrism, to supply the wants of their congregations.

After anointing the body with chrism, and making the sign of the cross, the bishop put his hands on the head of the candidate, and repeated this form: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."†

Thus the bishop and the priest, between them, regenerated and filled with the Spirit their deluded votaries, and made them believe that, without this mummery, which none but the holy order could perform with due effect, they could not possibly obtain salvation. Pacianus, bishop of Barcelona, says, "The seed of Christ, that is, the Spirit of God, brings forth a new man, by the hands of the priest, out of the womb of the church, which is the font, faith being the bride-maid to all this. And without these three sacraments, the laver, the chrism, and the priest, this new birth is not effected. For by the laver, sin is purged; by the chrism the Holy Spirit is poured down upon us; and both these we obtain by the hand and mouth of the priest; and so the whole man is regenerated and renewed in Christ.‡

* *Constit. Apost.*, lib. vii., c. 44.

† *Hanmer's Exercit. upon Confirm.*, p. 45, 2nd. edit.

‡ *Bingham's Antiq.*, b. xii., cap. 1, sect. 4.

But the Spirit of God is not confined to the hands of a bishop. The eunuch was baptized by Philip, a deacon ; and, without waiting upon any apostle or bishop for confirmation, he went on his way to Ethiopia rejoicing. Cornelius and his friends, before their baptism, received the Holy Ghost directly from heaven, without the use of any ceremonies. There can be no plea of necessity in this case, from the want of a bishop, because the apostle Peter was present ; and it is remarkable that, though he baptized them, he omitted the laying on of hands. If churchmen believe that any grace is imparted at confirmation, which none but a bishop can bestow, they are guilty of the most criminal neglect in not sending bishops to the East and West Indies, and to all our foreign possessions. As the diocese of London includes those places, it is humbly submitted to the bishop, whether it would not be a most apostolic action in his lordship to pass through these regions, " confirming the churches."*

The presumption of bishops in performing the ceremony of confirmation, and its pernicious influence on young people, are represented in a strong but just light by Mr. Towgood, in his letters to Mr. White. " I pray you, sir," says this spirited writer, " in the name of God, inform me what warrant has the bishop to pronounce a man's sins all forgiven, and himself regenerated by the Holy Ghost, upon no other grounds than his being able to say the short catechism, and declaring that he stands by his baptismal engagements? Will you say that this is the christian doctrine concerning the terms of acceptance and forgiveness with God? Are good vows and resolutions, declared in the church, infallible, or proper proofs of a regeneration by the Holy Ghost? Is a man's professing that he repents, and promising that he will live godly, that actual repentance and amendment of life, which alone can insure the divine pardon and favour? Are there

* Since this was written, bishops have been appointed to our foreign possessions ; but the churches there fare no better than those at home. — EDIT.

not multitudes who call Christ their lord, and publicly profess to stand by their baptismal covenant, whom, however, he will reject with abhorrence at last? You will inform me then, sir, how the bishops, upon this mere profession and promise, presume to declare to Almighty God, and to assure the person that he is regenerated, forgiven, and unquestionably in a state of favour with Heaven.

“The expressions, you must acknowledge, are couched in strong and absolute terms; nor do I find that there is any intimation that their forgiveness depends upon their care to keep, and to live up to their baptismal engagements. No; but, though their whole life hath hitherto been scandalously corrupt, yet, upon their being able to say the Lord’s prayer, etc., the bishop solemnly pronounces a most absolute pardon over them, appeals to Almighty God that he hath forgiven them all their sins, and, lest this should be too little to satisfy the doubting sinner, and appease his upbraiding conscience, he lays his hands upon his head, and certifies him, by that sign, of God’s favour and goodness towards him.

“This bishop, sir, the multitudes, who come to be confirmed, are taught to consider as an ambassador of Christ, a successor of the apostles, and a special minister of God. When they hear, then, this sacred person so solemnly declaring that they are fully justified, pardoned, and regenerated, by the Holy Ghost, can you blame them if they believe it, and rest satisfied that their souls are in a safe and happy state? And, as full remission of sins, and the favour of God are to be had upon such easy terms, can you wonder, should you see thousands eagerly flocking from all quarters to accept it? or, that persons of very wild and profligate characters, should often thrust themselves in to partake of this benefit, and to be seen receiving upon their knees, episcopal absolution, and solemn assurances of God’s favour and grace?*

* Towgood’s Dissent., p. 38, 39.

SECTION III.

ON BAPTISM.

As bishops, on account of the great extent of their dioceses, cannot perform all religious services themselves; they have acted wisely in granting a portion of the Spirit to others, to supply their lack of service. But still, everything is efficacious which is done by the priesthood. In the office for baptism, before the ceremony is performed, the person is supposed to be graceless, the water is sanctified to the mystical washing away of sin, and prayer is made for the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit. Immediately after the sprinkling, the congregation is informed that the "person is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church," and God is thanked that this new convert "is now born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation." When an infant has been baptized in private, and it is ascertained in the church that the ceremony was duly performed, the priest says, "I certify you, that in this case all is well done, and according to due order, concerning the baptizing of this child; who being born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, is now, by the laver of regeneration in baptism, received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life." In the catechism the child is taught to say, "In my baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

Cornelius and his friends received the Holy Ghost before baptism, and Simon Magus continued graceless after it; but our priests unite the divine Spirit to the water, and will allow of no regeneration before the mystical washing; but they certify both God and man, that as soon as the sprinkling is over, the new creature is born, and an union with Christ is effected. The general belief of this sentiment, that the baptism of an infant is absolutely necessary to its regeneration

and salvation, occasions the utmost anxiety and distress in the minds of superstitious parents, whose children die before a priest can be procured to give them the Holy Ghost and a passport to heaven. The practice formerly was to permit women, or any body, to baptize a sickly child, if a priest could not be procured in due time; and in hard labours, it was usual to baptize the head of the infant, before the whole delivery; but now the little ones must perish, should they die before the priest arrives, as no other person is permitted by the laws of the church to perform the ceremony.

Some ministers in their preaching, assure the most profligate characters that they were all born again in baptism, and that they ought not to believe what enthusiastic preachers say concerning the necessity of conversion, as applicable to them. It is certain, however, that if the spiritual birth does really take place in baptism, the new creature, in most cases, soon expires; and the corpse of departed virtue turns to moral corruption. But let a man's life be what it will, he must not be permitted to doubt the saving efficacy of clerical ministrations.

SECTION IV.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

IN the Lord's supper, the priest dexterously unites the body and blood of Christ to the bread and wine, which neither a deacon nor a laymen is able to do. Wonderful efficacy is ascribed to these holy mysteries. In the rubrick for the communion of the sick, it is remarked, "For as much as all mortal men be subject to many sudden perils, diseases, and sicknesses, and ever uncertain what time they shall depart out of this life; therefore, to the intent they may be always in a readiness to die, whensoever it shall please Almighty God to call them, the curates shall diligently, from time to time, (but especially in times of pestilence, or

other infectious sickness,) exhort their parishioners to the often receiving of the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ," etc. Here the people are taught that partaking of the Lord's supper is a preparation for death. Many churchmen heartily believe this doctrine, and venture their salvation upon it. Hence the most notorious sinners, when about to finish their career in vice, send for a priest to give them the sacrament, and prepare them for heaven.

If the sick man should defer too long to send for his minister, the church, in her charity, accepts the will for the deed, and, on a mere profession of repentance and faith, his soul is restored to spiritual health and soundness. "But if a man, either by reason of extremity of sickness, or for want of warning in due time to the curate, or for lack of company to receive with him, or by any other just impediment, do not receive the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, the curate shall instruct him, that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and steadfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the cross for him, and shed his blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving him hearty thanks therefore; he doth eat and drink the body and blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the sacrament with his mouth." Here it must be noted, that no exception is made, nor doubt expressed, in the case of the greatest profligate that ever lived. It generally happens that those who survive, return again to their old courses, like the dog to his vomit; which shows that their repentance was insincere, their faith dead, and their thanksgiving gross hypocrisy: yet, notwithstanding all this, had they left this world just after their confession to the priest, they would have died in the sure and certain hope of heaven. It is in consequence of a general belief in the saving efficacy of the last rites of the church, that so many abandon themselves to all sorts of vice so long as they enjoy health and strength; and, if it be true that God will accept of professions

and sacraments as a substitute for a life of piety and virtue, they are in the right; for who but a fool, will live in daily acts of self-denial and fleshly mortification, when he may receive from a priest, in his last moments, absolution from sin, health of soul, and a title to eternal life?

SECTION V.

ON ABSOLUTION.

IN the office for the visitation of the sick, the absolution runs in these words: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgives thee thine offences; and, by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

There is a difference of opinion among the clergy whether the absolution be judiciary, or only declarative. The proud are for the former, and the modest few for the latter. If nothing more be meant, than that God hath given priests authority to declare that those who repent and believe shall obtain forgiveness of sin, the sentiment could not be worse expressed than in the words of the absolution. Besides, every christian has authority from God, equally with a priest, to declare to a person who is troubled in his conscience, that if he heartily repent and believe, he shall find mercy. But the absolution will not bear this mild interpretation; it is not only so worded as to favour the judicial authority of the minister, but the church does not suffer a deacon to pronounce it, (though he is permitted, in religious assemblies, to explain the doctrines of the gospel,) which is an unaccountable restriction, if there be no power of absolution in the priest. Bishop Sparrow rejects, with indignation, the declarative interpretation, and asserts that "a power barely declarative is indeed none at all;

and that the apostles, and in them all priests, were made God's vicegerents here on earth, in his name to retain and forgive sins, not declaratively only, but judicially ; " adding, " Our holy mother, the church, hath prescribed a form of absolution in the visitation of the sick. He, then, that assents to the church of England, or believes the scriptures, or gives credit to the ancient fathers, cannot deny the priest the power of remitting sins." And again, " He that would be sure of pardon, let him seek out a priest, and make his humble confession to him ; for God, who alone hath the prime and original right of forgiving sins, hath delegated the priests his judges on earth, and given them the power of absolution ; so that they can, in his name, forgive the sins of those that humbly confess unto them." *

Our high priests found their assumed authority on the following texts : " I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (Matt. xvi. 19 ; xviii. 18 ; John xx. 23.)

By the keys of the kingdom of heaven being promised to the apostle Peter, is meant, that he should open the gospel dispensation to the Jews and Gentiles ; which promise was fulfilled when he preached the gospel to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and to Cornelius and his friends soon afterwards. (Acts ii. 14.)

The power of binding and loosing, which in the first text is promised to Peter, is in the second extended to every Christian community. Our Lord was speaking to the case of an offending brother, who, if he could not be persuaded of his error by private remonstrances,

* Sermon on the Power of Absolution, on John i. 9.

was to be brought before the whole church, or congregation, whose decision should be final. The binding and loosing here is the same as remitting and retaining sin in the last text. If the offending brother repented, the congregation loosed him; they remitted his sin, and were reconciled unto him; but if he remained incorrigible, they bound him; his sin was retained, and he was expelled the society. To give authority to the decisions of the church in matters of discipline, our Lord solemnly declared that they should be confirmed in the court of heaven. Two things must here be noted: —

First. It is not the sin as it relates to God, but as it relates to men, which the church has a power of binding or loosing, retaining or remitting. "If thy brother trespass against thee," and will not make suitable acknowledgments, he is to be treated as an heathen man and a publican, and his sin is to be bound upon him. (Matt. xviii. 15 — 18.) Now, in this sense of forgiving sin, priests have not only authority to do it, but, when a proper apology is made, it is their duty to do it. For it follows, "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, until seventy times seven."

Second. The decrees of priests do not bind either on earth or in heaven, when they are not according to the word of God. When Peter was for binding a load of Jewish ceremonies on the Gentile converts, Paul resisted this unscriptural assumption of power, and "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." And it is to be lamented, that the church did not, in after times, oppose the encroachments, of a proud, presumptuous, and interested clergy.

The discipline of the church of Corinth was executed by the laity. They had retained the sin of the incestuous person, and cut him off from their communion. This had the desired effect; he repented, and sought absolution. The apostle exhorted them to be recon-

ciled unto him, remarking, "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was inflicted of many. So that ye ought to forgive him, and comfort him." (2 Cor. ii. 6, 7.) If the absolution in this instance extended to the conscience, in the sight of God, remember it was given by the laity, and not by the clergy.

Every private christian has the same power to forgive a sin committed against himself, which ecclesiastics have to pardon offences committed against the church. In the Lord's prayer, which every christian ought to use, is this petition: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

No one can forgive sins committed against God, but God himself. "Who can forgive sins but God only? It is God that justifieth." But to cite all the texts which ascribe the justification of a sinner to the supreme Being, would fill a volume. It will be said, however, that though it be the prerogative of the Most High to pardon sinners, yet he may, if he pleases, delegate his authority to priests. If so, then prayer and supplication should be made to priests, and not to God, for forgiveness. The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son, and this is assigned as the reason why the Father judgeth no man. (John v. 22.) By parity of reason, if he hath committed the pardon of sin to the priests, it will follow that he pardoneth no man. In this case, therefore, the priest, and not the Deity, is the proper object of religious worship.

Repentance and faith are necessary to obtain the favour of God, according to the whole tenor of the New Testament: the priest requires a profession of these before he gives absolution; but he possesses no means of ascertaining to a certainty that the conditions of the new covenant have been duly performed. Can anything be more ridiculous and presumptuous? Is a mere saying, "I repent," and repeating the creed, that repentance and faith which obtain salvation? When a priest absolves a person who has not performed the conditions required, he either tells a lie, and deceives a soul to its ruin; or else, by the plenitude of his sa-

cerdotal powers, he can "change the truth of God into a lie," for the infallible word hath declared, "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish. He that believeth not, shall be damned."

If God had given to priests a power to remit or retain sins committed against himself, he would have qualified them for the due exercise of this high authority, by giving them a thorough knowledge of the human heart; and he would have provided against any wilful abuse of their power in retaining the sins of the virtuous, and remitting those of the vicious, by making them men of the most inflexible integrity. To believe that God has made the salvation or damnation of his creatures depend upon the will of ignorant and capricious ecclesiastics, is a faith worse than atheism.

The clergy are far more ready to pardon the worst of sins committed against God, than to forgive a venial trespass against themselves. A sinner may have affronted the majesty of heaven for three score years and ten, and obtain an absolution for nothing; but what must become of the damnable heretic, who dares to open his mouth, or to take up his pen, against the majesty of the priesthood!

It is confessed on all hands, that till the twelfth or thirteenth century, the forms of absolution were not indicative, "I absolve thee;" but deprecatory, "Christ absolve thee." The following form of absolution is taken from the old penitential canons, of the year 963. For its modesty, in the height of popery, it merits notice: "The Almighty God, who created the heaven and the earth, and every creature, have mercy upon thee, and grant thee forgiveness of all thy sins, which thou hast ever committed, from thy being made a christian to this time, through," etc.* Nelson says, "The old way of absolution was by prayer and imposition of hands; but that was disused about the beginning of the twelfth century, and the new method introduced under those authoritative words, "I absolve thee," etc.; and,

* Free and Candid Disquisit., page 329.

because the natural import of such a positive sentence might lead men into an opinion that the clergy assumed a power of pardoning sins, therefore it was always tempered with some softer expression, namely, "I absolve thee, in so far as it is granted to me; or, as far as the accusation comes from the penitent," etc.* In those days popish priests were modest, in comparison of our modern reformed clergy!

SECTION VI.

ON THE BURIAL SERVICE.

It is not at all surprising, when everything done by a priest is so full of spiritual efficacy, that all who submit to his authority should go to heaven. Accordingly we find, from the burial office, that every member of the church dies "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life." This office is read over all indiscriminately, with the exception of infidels, suicides, and excommunicated persons. Moral character is out of the question. Though a man die with an oath upon his tongue, in a state of intoxication, or in a brothel, he is the "dear brother" of the priest, who thanks God for delivering him "out of the miseries of this sinful world;" and makes meek supplication to Heaven "that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in Christ, as our hope is this our brother doth." Thus a churchman, on the ground of professions, which are unsupported by a single virtue, and contradicted by the worst of vices, is, through the power of the priest, justified, sanctified, and glorified!

Several curious and ingenious explications of the burial office have been given by well meaning clergymen, with a view to remove that scandal which it has generally occasioned. It may not be amiss to notice those which moderate men have thought most satisfactory.

* Nelson's Rights of the Clergy, Art. Absolut.

First. Dr. Bennet says: "It is plain from the whole tenor of this office, that it was never intended to be used at the burial of such persons as die in a state of notorious impenitence, without any appearance or profession of their return to God. So that those clergymen (if any such there can be) who read this form at the funeral of the most profligate and debauched sinners, do not only act without authority, but against the manifest design of the church. I hope, therefore, that none of my brethren will ever prostitute this excellent service to the worst of purposes, to the encouragement of vice, and the hardening of sinners; and that they will never change the whole of it into one continued and deliberate falsehood by so scandalous a misapplication." * But the good doctor seems to have forgotten that the 68th canon obliges the clergy to read the office over all, except excommunicated persons. "No minister shall refuse or delay to bury any corpse that is brought to the church or churchyard, (convenient warning being given him thereof before,) in such manner and form as is prescribed in the book of common prayer. And if he shall refuse, except the party diseased were denounced excommunicated, *majori excommunicatione*, for some grievous and notorious crime, (and no man able to testify of his repentance,) he shall be suspended by the bishop of the diocese from his ministry by the space of three months."

Secondly. Dr. Nichols explains the matter thus: "According to the rules of christian charity, we hope for the salvation of every deceased person, who dies within the pale of the church; as thinking we cannot, without the greatest arrogance, exclude any, in our private judgment, from the common reward of christians, whom the church hath not thought fit to exclude by her public censure." † To this Mr. Peirce replied: "I am utterly ignorant what those rules of christianity

* Free and candid Disquisit., page 132, 133.

† Defence of the Church of England, p. 339.

are, which require us to hope thus concerning men, who were, it may be, notorious for all manner of wickedness. The Spirit of God testifies, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. How then can we hope that such are made partakers of the eternal inheritance, provided only they died not under the church's censure? How many wicked wretches are daily buried, who, as they gave no signs of so much as a death-bed repentance, have left us no room for such a hope in their case? To require ministers to express such a hope, is as wicked as it is absurd. Nay, if we suppose the case to be doubtful, what occasion is there to say anything about it? But profligate wretches meet with that charity among our adversaries, which several of the furious high blades refuse to show to any dissenters. Nor can it be expressed how great mischief has been done to religion, by the promiscuous use of this form in burying the dead. Men are easily hardened in their impieties, when they hear such hope is entertained of those that lived and died like themselves. If it were left to a minister's discretion to express this charitable hope of the dead he buries, or not to express it, according as he saw there was reason, it would be quite another case. But since they are required always to say the same, of all those that have been baptized, and did not die excommunicate, or by laying violent hands on themselves, we cannot oblige ourselves to conform to such a custom."* The office does not merely express a judgment of charity respecting the possibility of the salvation of all churchmen, though that would be stretching the point quite far enough, but asserts the certainty of it in the most absolute terms: "In sure and certain hope," etc.

Thirdly. A few writers of less note, suppose the sure and certain hope has reference merely to the resurrection of the body, without deciding anything about the state which follows, whether happy or miserable. But this resurrection is stated in the office to be to eternal life; a

* Peirce's Vindication of the Dissenters, page 556.

phrase which, in the New Testament, always denotes future happiness, and can intend nothing else in this office; for the apostle is immediately quoted where he speaks of the bodies of believers being "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body," (Phil. iii. 21,) a privilege which is restricted to the faithful. Besides, the ground of this confidence determines the nature of it. "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, of his great mercy, to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground, in sure and certain hope."

Though many pious clergymen have complained of this office, and though several applications have been made for a revision of it, nothing has been done; which proves it to be the fixed and deliberate judgment of the church, that the most profligate of her members are, without doubt, saved everlastingly; since it is incredible that she should be conscious of an error upon so momentous a subject, for near three hundred years without correcting it.

After all, the dissenters ought not to press hard upon the church, for it has been recently determined, in a spiritual court, that the clergy are obliged to read this office over them, as well as churchmen; and it would appear ill-natured to censure that charity as excessive to friends, which is not denied even to enemies. It may also be presumed, that the decision of this case will cure the clergy of their bigotry; for it would be too ludicrous to excite anything else than laughter, to hear a minister in the morning denouncing dissenters as damnable heretics, and to hear the same man in the afternoon, when burying one of these limbs of the devil, call him a dear brother, who is certainly gone to heaven, and pray meekly for himself and other churchmen, that their last end may be like his.

The case of suicides is singular and critical. The clergy have no power of judging of the state of their minds, but their christian burial, which turns upon this point, is determined by a jury of laymen; so that, in

fact, the salvation or damnation of these unhappy persons, in the judgment of the church, depends upon the verdict of the laity ! *

ESSAY IV.

ON LEARNING.

How much learning is necessary to qualify for the sacred ministry ? Just so much as is necessary to acquire a knowledge of christianity ; for he who understands any art or science is qualified to teach it. Thus a man who understands the art of shoe making, can teach others to make shoes ; a lawyer, who is well versed in the principles of justice, the civil code of the realm, and the practice of the courts, is competent to give instructions on jurisprudence ; a physician who is acquainted with anatomy and physiology, the nature, causes and symptoms of diseases, and the properties of medicines, is sufficiently learned to give lectures on the healing art ; and the reason equally holds in relation to all other professions.

The question, therefore, is, What learning is necessary to acquire a knowledge of christianity ? The clergy reply, a knowledge of the languages in which the sacred scriptures were originally written. But this can only be true upon the supposition, that the translation does not give the sense of the original ; a supposition which reflects disgrace upon the translators, as ignorant or designing men, in giving us a spurious version, and upon the present clergy, as enemies to learning and religion, in not giving us a better. When a motion is made, however, for a new translation, the clergy are

* This is an aggravated statement of the case. The judgment of the church is not that the salvation or damnation of the suicide depends on the *verdict* of the laity, but that the ground of hope respecting his *religious* state, and his consequent *right* to christian burial, depends much on the evidence presented to the jurors of his *sanity* or insanity. — EDIT.

loudest in the cry, that the old one is strictly just and faithful. It may therefore be safely affirmed, that by a careful and devout perusal of the Bible, the christian system may be comprehended, and that, consequently, a knowledge of the dead languages is not necessary to a teacher of the science of salvation.

But it is said, admitting our translation to be a good one, yet every scholar knows, that it is impossible to give the full force and spirit of any work, in a translation ; and that, however well it may be executed, it must from the nature of things contain some errors. This is granted. But still it will not be denied, that the doctrines, duties, privileges, and rewards of christianity, may all be clearly made out from the authorised version, and may therefore be inculcated with effect by a minister who is ignorant of Greek and Hebrew.

It may justly be inferred from the imperfections and errors of the translation, that a critical knowledge of the originals is useful, though not necessary. But when it is considered what innumerable new translations, paraphrases, commentaries, dissertations, histories and dictionaries of the Bible, we have in our own language, a man of extensive reading and good understanding, may acquire a critical knowledge of the sacred books, without studying the languages in which they were written. A dabbler in Greek and Hebrew can add nothing to our stores of biblical criticism, and possesses no advantages over a mere English scholar.

If it were supposed that a minister must be a master in the dead languages, the sentiment would be more fatal to the church than to the conventicle ; for after all the parade of the clergy about learning, it is questionable whether there be a body of reverends in the protestant world, which contains so large a proportion of ignoramuses as are to be found in our establishment. Not one in a hundred of them has a critical knowledge of the Greek, nor one in a thousand of the Hebrew. How contemptible to hear a man boasting of his learning, who cannot deliver a discourse of twenty minutes long without book, and who cannot read it with as

much grace and pathos as a boarding-school miss does her favourite novel !

It is pretty generally admitted, that Greek and Hebrew can contribute very little more towards clearing and illustrating the sacred text. These languages have been cultivated with so much zeal and success, and such pains have been taken to procure and collate manuscripts, that there is scarcely anything left for the man to do who comes after the kings that, for the last two centuries, have reigned over the world of sacred literature. The learned have now turned their attention to the Samaritan, which was the language of the Jews before the captivity, to the Arabic, from which the Hebrew is probably derived ; and to the several oriental languages which bear any affinity to the Greek and Hebrew, and in which any ancient manuscripts of the scriptures are to be found. The ministers among the sectaries are labouring in this new field of action, while the principal part of the clergy are applying to the Latin ; a language in which few works are preserved that are not full of either the debaucheries of heathenism, or the superstitions and persecutions of corrupted christianity.

There is nothing important in christianity which a man of common capacity cannot comprehend. The clergy are perpetually insisting on the necessity of a learned education in ministers, because they have to dispense the mysteries of our holy religion. This cant refers to baptism and the Lord's supper. Let us therefore inquire, what there is of mystery and difficulty in the administration of these sacraments. It cannot require much learning to sprinkle a little water upon a child, and say, " I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It must be confessed, however, that there are some mysteries in baptism, as practised in the church of England. For instance : there is something inexplicably mysterious in asking an infant, " Wilt thou be baptized ? Wilt thou obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of

thy life?" It would be equally proper to interrogate the baby upon other subjects, on which it could certainly give quite as much information: it might be demanded, "Wilt thou be a soldier, a sailor, or a parson? Wilt thou at a proper age be married?" etc. There is no less mystery in asking the sponsor, "Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works? Dost thou believe," etc. If we can believe and obey by proxy, we may also be saved by proxy; for nothing more than faith and obedience is necessary to salvation. This is certainly a very mysterious subject; but thus much is plain, that a man who can go to heaven by proxy, may possibly go to hell himself.

No person has a right voluntarily to become responsible for another, who has not the means of fulfilling the obligation. When a man, therefore, engages for the virtue of another, he ought to possess the power of making him virtuous, which is inconsistent both with free agency and the grace of God, — or else he ought to possess as much virtue himself, as will satisfy for them both, in which case the popish doctrine of works of supererogation is established, and the sale of indulgences, founded upon it, justified. But whatever mystery there may be in this business, it is certain no very great degree of learning is necessary to ask infants and their sponsors these silly questions.

The bread and wine in the Lord's supper are called holy mysteries. There is nothing mysterious in the celebration of the eucharist, as practised by the first christians. Our Lord did not consecrate the bread and wine when he instituted the supper, any more than the loaves and fishes when he fed the multitude; for he rendered the same thanksgiving to God on both occasions. Compare the texts:—

"And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and

"Jesus took the bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to the disciples; and said, take, eat, this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and

brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples gave to them, saying, drink ye all of it." (Matt. xxvi. 26, 27.)*
to the multitude.

"And he took the seven loaves, and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude." (Matt. xiv. 19; xv. 36.)

It surely is not necessary, that a man should have much learning to qualify himself to express gratitude to God, to hand about a little bread and wine, and to desire the people to take it in remembrance of the death of Christ, and as figurative of his body and blood. But in the church of England this subject is enveloped in mystery. The priest consecrates the elements by a prayer; and in doing this, he must "lay his hand upon all the bread, and upon every vessel in which there is any wine to be consecrated." This is a very mysterious touch, a deacon's hand is not sufficiently holy to perform this magical operation; some spiritual virtue must surely be infused into the sacred food, because if any of it remains, "it shall not be carried out of the church, but the priest, etc., shall, immediately after the blessing, reverently eat and drink the same."

But these mysteries are explained in the catechism, where we are told, "The body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper." It is not the body and blood of Christ figuratively, or even spiritually, but verily and indeed, that is taken by the faithful. The only difference, therefore, between a popish and protestant priest in this affair, is, the papist changes the bread and wine

* Our translators have added the pronoun *it*, "He blessed *it*;" but there is no *it* in the original, and should be none in the translation; for it was not the bread, which our Lord blessed, but God. When he took the cup, he gave thanks. If the pronoun be retained in the preceding verse, it ought not to be omitted in this, and then the reading will be. "And he took the cup and gave it thanks," which is making Christ an idolater.

into flesh and blood, and the protestant unites, after some mysterious manner, the flesh and blood to the bread and wine. Of the two operators, the papist is undoubtedly the most dexterous ; but there is, "verily and indeed," another mystery connected with this, and that is, How many bodies has Jesus Christ, if one be verily and indeed taken by each of the faithful in the Lord's supper ? We are as completely lost in this mystery, as in the transubstantiation of the catholics. If the priest can produce no change in the bread and wine, why all this superstitious ceremony ? this affectation of mystery ?

In the church of Corinth, there was no minister to consecrate and give the elements, as is clear from the whole relation ; for, in that case, the apostle ought to have blamed the priest, and not the people, for the irregularities of which he complained. And it ought to be noted, that though he gives directions for the due celebration of this christian festival, he says nothing about a priest presiding, which shows that his presence is not necessary.

There are certainly mysteries of godliness, as well as mysteries of iniquity ; but a preacher's duty is not about mysteries, but truths clearly revealed. How the three persons of the Godhead subsist in one divine nature, and how the two natures of Christ are united in one person, are mysteries which all the learning in the world cannot explain. They who have attempted such things, have demonstrated nothing but their own folly.

Much learning is supposed to be necessary to a minister, because the arts and sciences are frequently alluded to in scripture ; and such passages, it is said, cannot be explained by illiterate persons. Suppose this were true, is it necessary to explain such passages in teaching the way of salvation ? Is it impossible to preach the gospel, without demonstrating the Mosaic account of the creation to be strictly philosophical ? and describing the chemical process by which Aaron's calf was reduced to powder ?

There is more frequent allusion in the sacred writings

to common arts and employments, than to the higher branches of science, for most of the arts in those days were in a state of infancy, and many of the sacred writers were illiterate persons; hence a jack-of-all-trades possesses many advantages over a delicate gentleman, who is ignorant of the concerns of common life.

A farmer, in preaching from, "Ye are God's husbandry," will plough up the fallow ground of the heart, destroy the weeds of sin, sow it with the word, manure it with the Spirit, water it with the means of grace, and keep it clean with watchfulness; he will ripen the precious grain with the Sun of Righteousness, reap it with the sickle of angels, and gather it into the garner of God. Set a young man, just arrived from the university to preach from such a text, and it is ten to one but he will begin to sow among thorns; the seed of the word by this imprudence will be choked, and his expectations at the time of harvest will be disappointed. If an infidel be railing at the Bible as a false book, because it represents the land of Canaan as a land flowing with milk and honey, though modern travellers inform us it is a barren wilderness, a farmer can give him examples of land, which, a few years ago, was unproductive, that now yields thirty, sixty, or an hundred fold; and will account for the difference betwixt the ancient and modern state of the soil, by showing the influence of cultivation upon it. But a clergyman, unacquainted with agriculture, will be foiled by such objections, and will grace the triumph of infidelity. A shipwright can silence all the cavils of unbelievers against the capacity and shape of the ark. He can demonstrate that her dimensions were sufficiently large to contain so many animals, and provisions for them for so long a time; and that she was admirably well constructed for setting at defiance the destructive element, and proudly riding on a ruined world. A sailor will give an interesting account of the shipwreck of St. Paul, and the anchor of hope. A weaver will preach a most affecting discourse from, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle."

Upon these, and many other subjects, a common mechanic has much the advantage of a man who knows nothing but a few dead languages, and the arts of courtly address; discussions on the scripture allusions to arts and sciences, however, are, in general, more suitable for the press than the pulpit; and a large fund of valuable information may be collected from Harmer's Observations, and from the fragments appended to Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible.

A minister should be learned, it is said, to enable him to defend his religion, and convert its enemies. Piety is the best defence of christianity; hence christians are exhorted, "by well doing, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." The christian religion contains so excellent and perfect a system of morality, and its positive institutions have so close and intimate a relation to its moral precepts, that infidels have never found much to object to in the New Testament; the vices of professors and ministers have ever been their favourite topics of scandal. The French philosophers were perpetually declaiming on the superstitions and sins of the church and clergy; and without employing scarce a single argument which would have affected the sacred books, they converted their countrymen into a nation of infidels. Religion has nothing to dread from its open enemies, when not betrayed by its pretended friends. Virtue is the sword as well as the shield of religion; with this she not only defends herself against the attacks of her foes, but also subdues them to the obedience of faith. Our Lord prayed for the union of his disciples with himself, and for their preservation from the vices of the age, that the world might believe and know that he was sent of God; and he exhorted them to let their light shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, might be induced to glorify their heavenly Father. (John xvii. 21—23; Matt. v. 16.)

Deists are to be found principally in high life; and dissenting ministers, of course, hold little or no converse with them: hence, however necessary learn-

ing may be to fashionable divines, who have to conflict with knight-errants, it is of very little consequence to persons who never had, and probably never will have, such spiritual foes to encounter. And with all the hard fighting against the opposers of our faith, and the skill and dexterity displayed by our clerical champions, what conquests have been made? Has half a dozen of mighty and noble infidels been added within the last century to the number of the faithful? It is generally over the bottle that our gentry discuss the merits of christianity; and is it to be expected, that a clergyman who participates in their revels, should make any favourable impression upon their minds, when his own cheeks are reddened, and his intellects disordered by half a score bumpers? There are few preachers, however, but have read Paley, Newton, Butler, etc., and have thereby qualified themselves to support, with as much ability as most clergymen can do, the divine authority and obligation of our holy religion.

Proud and haughty mortals think themselves the only beings in the world that deserve attention. Hence the gospel of Christ must be suited to the classical taste, and limited to the comprehension of the literati: it must command the homage, without enlightening the understandings of the vulgar. The heathen systems of philosophy were founded upon metaphysical subtleties and abstract speculations, which only a few individuals of the keenest penetration and brightest genius could possibly comprehend; and, therefore, what little good there might be in them was hid from the multitude. But must we identify christianity, in its leading principles, with paganism?

The Parent of mankind hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth; we all are partakers of one common nature, are exposed to the same temptations, and are required to practise the same virtues; the souls of the rich and learned are not more valuable in the esteem of Heaven, than those of the poor and illi-

terate ; hence we may fairly conclude, that a revelation from God must be adapted to the capacities and circumstances of men in general, since all stand in equal need of it, and all are equally interested in it. The gospel recognises the truth of these principles, and is constructed upon them.

As the bulk of mankind have neither capacity nor opportunity for making much progress in learning, the gospel is accommodated to their condition. "The poor have the gospel preached to them. God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom." (Matt. xi. 5; James ii. 5.) They understood our Saviour, and became converts to his doctrine: "The common people heard him gladly." (Mark xii. 37.) The meanness of his followers gave umbrage to the Pharisees, who demanded, with a haughty and contemptuous air, "Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him?" (John vii. 48.) The plainness and simplicity of the gospel was treated with derision by the Gentile philosophers, — the preaching of the cross was to them foolishness. (1 Cor. i. 23.) But the scoffs and sneers of Jewish priests and heathen sophists could not induce our Lord and his apostles to new-model the New Testament to their taste: "Jesus said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Matt. xi. 25, 26.) The apostle Paul says, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." (1 Cor. i. 26, 29.)

Had the christian revelation been wrapt up in

mystery and obscurity, the learned might have employed their curiosity upon it, and prided themselves upon finding out the riddle; but this would have been gratifying a few at the expense of the multitude. Upon the present plan, the wise and prudent have to stoop to receive the gospel, and are thus taught humility as they enter into the kingdom of God. Here all men are upon a level; the rich and poor, the learned and illiterate meet together; the Lord is the Saviour of them all. The christian religion contains a few articles of faith, which furnish helps and motives to the practice of its precepts; and it is supported by miracles, prophecies, and internal characters of divinity. Its creed, morals, and evidence, are all adapted to the meanest capacities: "He who runs may read, and the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." (Isaiah xxxv. 8.)

Telling people that the gospel system is too difficult for common comprehension, has had a most pernicious effect upon the morals and manners of the lower orders of society. The obligations of religion cannot be binding upon persons who are incapable of understanding its nature: if the New Testament, therefore, be so mysterious, that the illiterate cannot make out its meaning, they have nothing to do with it; and, indeed, this is all that the greater part of them pretend to know about it. They have heard so much preaching of late concerning the mysteries of our holy religion, and the impossibility of shoemakers, carpenters, tailors, and chimney-sweepers understanding it, —all which stuff has been urged with apostolic zeal, to keep them from the tabernacle, —that multitudes of these poor deluded creatures have concluded religion is intended only for the learned, and have excused themselves for neglecting it in their lives, by saying: "O Sir! these things are too deep for us! We are no skollards. Our parson says if we make much ado about religion, it will make us crazy!"

What then, it is demanded, must every ignoramus, who thinks he understands religion, be allowed to turn

preacher? Certainly, but the people are not obliged to honour him with their attendance; they will not listen long to the vociferations of ignorance, and pay for it into the bargain; the evil will, therefore, soon cure itself. Learning, piety, and eloquence will command the multitude; and the dull, the graceless, and the senseless, will soon be obliged to shut up shop.

It is commonly said, that the illiterate will propagate false doctrine, but there is very little danger from that quarter. It is agreed on all hands, that there is a deformity in error which is forbidding; and hence it is necessary, in order to procure it a favourable reception, that it should be artfully disguised in the garb of truth and innocence. But an ignoramus is not adequate to this task,—it requires a person of consummate abilities to introduce heresy without exciting suspicion; there is not a single article in the creed of heterodoxy, but what owes its prolonged existence to some literary character who has taken it under his protection. Error has sometimes been begotten by ignorance, but it has never long survived its birth, when not nursed by learning. Instead, therefore, of lamenting that the illiterate will support heresy, it is desirable that it may never get into better hands: and then, like the ephemera in the natural world, it will live only for a day.

Learning is sure to lead into the paths of error, when not under the guidance of piety. Two reasons may be assigned for this: First. Learning, when not humbled by religion, is proud. She looks above truth, which dwells with the meek and lowly, and builds a castle in the air, from which she receives the adoration of the gaping multitude, who, forgetting that it has no foundation to rest upon, are lost in astonishment at the grandeur of the edifice, and are extravagant in their praise of the abilities of the architect. Our Saviour addressed himself in thanksgiving to God, for hiding the gospel from the wise and prudent, and for revealing it unto babes, that is, persons of an humble and teachable disposition. And, no doubt, the principal reason why the wise and prudent ones of

the present day talk so much about mysteries in religion, is,—the gospel is hid from their eyes. But it is revealed to the meek and lowly, who learn of Christ; and, therefore, they have no mysteries in their creed.

Secondly. A man of parts, without piety, finds nothing in the holy, abasing, self-denying doctrines of the gospel to engage his affections; and he can only be induced to become a preacher of it from motives of interest. Christianity is valuable in his esteem no further than as it can be moulded into a system of priestcraft; to this object, therefore, his labours are directed. And because he perceives the New Testament condemns most strongly in priests a haughty spirit, and the love of filthy lucre, he endeavours to make the laity believe, that it is a very mysterious book, and that a learned clergy are best qualified to explain and dispense its sacred mysteries; hence creeds and liturgies, pompous rites and ceremonies, have been provided to amuse the vulgar, and draw their attention from the sacred records. By such men, the Bible is supposed to be in religion, what mercury is in medicine,—taken according to the prescriptions of a professional gentleman, it is a specific for almost every evil; but otherwise, it is always dangerous, and generally fatal to meddle with it. Thus the people are turned from the fountain of truth, and persuaded to drink in error. A sensible writer has remarked:—“The meanest man is as much interested and concerned in the truth of religion, as the greatest priest; and though his knowledge thereof be not in all respects equally easy, yet in some respects it may be easier. For want of learning does not so much hinder the light of the layman, as worldly advantage and faction sometimes does the priests. Corruption in the church, before our Saviour, and in our Saviour’s days, and ever since, has oftener begun among the greatest priests, rabbis, and bishops, than among the meanest laity.”*

* True Grounds of Ecclesiastical Regimen, page 84.

As priestcraft is the only religion of corrupt ministers, so their principal concern is to support the dignity, and promote the interest of the priesthood. Popery, though a solid mass of sin and error, is the best organized system of priestcraft that ever was invented; and hence all the profligate ministers of the church of Rome, however learned, have always been determined enemies to reformation. It has already been noticed, that most of the bishops voted against the very first act of the reformation, — that of disowning the authority of the pope. But when the king and parliament carried that point in opposition to them, these mitred gentry, true to their principle, that half a loaf is better than no bread, all, except one, set their hands to the bill, and held their places, and thus betrayed the suppleness of their consciences.

No person is silly enough to believe, that the blustering of a wicked priest, in favour of an establishment, flows from a conviction of its apostolic constitution, and an anxious concern for the interests of religion. It is a matter of no consequence to him, whether the national creed be true or false, good or bad. It is enough for him, that he gets some hundreds, perhaps thousands a-year by it. Demetrius and his friends, roared out most lustily, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" But he explained to them the principle which inspired this holy transport: — "By this we have our gains! Our craft is in danger!"

The apostles, if we except Paul, were not learned men. It is said that though they were not favoured with a liberal education, inspiration supplied that defect; but I affirm it did not. Their inspiration supplied them with valuable religious sentiments, but did not make them learned in other things, nor enable them to write with classic purity and elegance. Any man, by reading the New Testament with suitable dispositions, may make himself master of their sentiments, and then he has acquired all the learning which they received by inspiration; and when he has added to this, a rustic education equal to theirs, he is

on a level with them in point of literature. As the advocates for a learned ministry have long deluded the vulgar upon this subject, and affirmed that illiterate men have no right to preach, unless they possess the same kind and degree of inspiration with which the apostles were favoured, and which none now pretend to, but wild enthusiasts, and frantic fanatics, I must prepare for the most formidable opposition; I shall not, therefore, attempt to fortify my opinion by arguments of my own, but by extracts from critics of the greatest eminence, whose authority will impose silence, should their reasonings fail to produce conviction.

Paul is universally acknowledged to have been the most learned among the apostles; if in any of them, therefore, we may expect to find in him a fine writer. Hear Dr. Macknight: "Although the sermons and epistles of the apostle Paul be much superior in sentiment to the finest orations and treatises of the Greeks, many who are judges of elegant writing, I doubt not, will pronounce them inferior, both in composition and style. But though with Beza I acknowledge that Paul was capable of all the different kinds of fine writing; of the simple, the pathetic, the ironical, the vehement, and the sublime; and that he hath given admirable specimens of these several kinds of eloquence in his sermons and epistles; I would not be understood to mean, that he ought, upon the whole, to be considered either as an elegant, or as an eloquent writer. The method and connexion of his writings are too much concealed to entitle him to these appellations; and his style, in general, is neither copious nor smooth. His style, upon the whole, is difficult and obscure."

The apostle despised fine writing. "As he did not follow the rules prescribed by the Greek rhetoricians in disposing the matter of his discourses, so he hath not observed their precepts in the choice of his words, the arrangement of his sentences, and the measure of his periods. That kind of speaking and writing which is more remarkable for an artificial structure of

words, and a laboured smoothness of periods, than for truth of sentiment and justness of reasoning, was called by the apostle the wisdom of speech, (1 Cor. i. 17,) and the persuasive words of human wisdom, (1 Cor. ii. 4,) and was utterly disclaimed by him: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, nor of wisdom, declaring the testimony of God." (1 Cor. ii. 1.)

The Doctor assigns three good reasons why the apostle Paul, and the sacred writers in general, did not distinguish their productions by classic purity and elegance.

1. "In the first place, a concise unadorned style in preaching and writing, though accompanied with some obscurity, was, in the apostle's situation, preferable to the clear and elegant manner of writing practised by the Grecian orators. For as he himself tells us, it was intended by Christ, to make the world sensible that the conversion of mankind was accomplished, neither by the charms of speech, nor by the power of sounds, nor by such arguments as a vain philosophy was able to furnish; but by those great and evident miracles which accompanied the first preaching of the gospel, and by the suitableness of its doctrines to the necessities of mankind: facts, which it is of the greatest importance for us, in these later ages, to be well assured of. 'Christ sent me to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of speech, that the cross of Christ might not be made ineffectual.' (1 Cor. i. 17.) 'My discourse and my preaching was not with the persuasive words of human wisdom, but with the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.' 'That your faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.'" (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.)

2. "Because it is well known to the critics, that the style in writing which is esteemed most elegant, derives its chief excellence from the frequent use of metaphors and allusions, which though they may charm the learned, are of no value in the eye of the illiterate, who cannot apply them to their proper counterparts. Whatever delight, therefore, such latent beauties may

give to those who can unfold them, to the vulgar they are little better than a picture to a blind man; for which reason the apostle, with great propriety, hath, for the most part, neglected them."

3. "The sacred oracles were not designed as works of genius, to attract the admiration of the learned, nor to set before them a finished model of fine writing for their imitation; but to turn mankind from sin to God. For which purpose, the graces of a florid, or even of a melodious style, were certainly of little value, in comparison of those more solid excellencies of sentiment and language, whereby the scriptures have become the power of God unto salvation to all who believe them; and will continue to be so till the end of time. We may therefore in this, as in every other instance, affirm with the apostle, that 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men,' (1 Cor. i. 25,) and may with understanding, ascribe to God, only wise, the glory that is due to him, on account of the admirable contrivance of his word."*

Dr. Campbell remarks in his preface to John's gospel: "This gospel bears marks more signal than any of them, that it is the work of an illiterate Jew. Upon the whole, John's style is thought to be more idiomatical, and less conformable to the syntactic order, than that of any other writer in the New Testament. There is none whose manner more bespeaks an author destitute of the advantages which result from letters and education."

This author justifies the apostles in the use of plain and homely language: "It is not to be dissembled," says he, "that the sacred penmen of the New Testament have, especially in modern times, had some strenuous advocates, both among foreigners and amongst our own countrymen, who have, in my opinion, with more zeal than judgment, defended their diction, as being, when judged by the rules of gram-

* New Translation, Vol. i., Essay iii.

mar and rhetoric, and by the practice of the most celebrated writers in Greece, altogether pure and elegant. They seem to suspect, that to yield, even on the clearest evidence, a point of this nature, though regarding ornaments merely human and exterior, might bring dishonour on inspiration or render it questionable. I cannot help thinking that these people must have very indistinct ideas on this subject, and be justly said to incur the reproof which Peter, on a memorable occasion, received from his master, — that ‘they savour more the things of men than the things of God.’ (Matt. xvi. 23.) Are words of any kind more than arbitrary signs? And may not the same be said with justice of phrases and idioms? Is there a natural fitness in one word or phrase more than in another, for denoting the thing signified? Is not the connexion between sounds and ideas merely artificial, — the result of human, though tacit conventions? With regard to those rules which constitute purity in the language of any country, what are they, in effect, but the conventions which have happened to obtain among the natives, particularly those of the higher ranks? Vulgarisms, and foreign idioms, which may obtain among strangers, and those of the lower ranks, have no more natural unfitness to convey the sense which they that use them intend to convey by them, than the terms and phrases which, in consequence of the preference given by their superiors, may be regarded as elegancies. It may be as reasonably objected against our religion, that the persons by whom it was propagated, were chosen from what men, in high life, account the dregs of the people, as that the Holy Spirit should accommodate himself to the language of those who were actually chosen. Nay, language as well as dress, being in fact, no more than a species or mode, it may with as good reason be maintained that the ambassadors whom Christ sent for promulgating his doctrine, should have been habited like gentlemen, and men of fashion, as that they should have spoken the dialect of such. Splendid style had no more connexion with

the purpose of their mission than splendid apparel. The cloth which they wore, how coarse soever, answered all the essential purposes of clothing; the same may be said of the language which they spoke. And if it be argued, that good language would create greater respect to their persons, and closer attention to what they said, and, consequently, would contribute to its making a deeper impression; as much may be affirmed, with truth, of a genteel appearance both of person and dress. Nothing serves more powerfully to quash curiosity and expectation, and consequently to destroy attention, than such an external figure as generally accompanies poverty and ignorance, and suggests a total want of the advantages of education, and more especially, of that indispensable advantage which the fashionable world calls seeing good company.

“But these very disadvantages, or defects, both in speech and in outward figure, are assigned, by the inspired writers, as the reasons of God’s preference, whose thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are our ways his ways. Paul argues, that the success of the preachers of the gospel, in spite of the absence of those accomplishments in language then so highly valued, was an evidence of the divine power and energy, with which their ministry was accompanied. He did not address them, he tells us, (1 Corinthians i. 17,) ‘With the wisdom of words’—with artificial periods and a studied elocution, ‘lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect;’ lest to human eloquence that success should be ascribed, which ought to be attributed to the divinity of the doctrine, and the agency of the Spirit, in the miracles wrought in support of it. There is hardly any sentiment which he is at greater pains to enforce. He used none of the enticing, or persuasive words of man’s wisdom. Wherefore? ‘That their faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.’ (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.) Should I ask, what was the reason why our Lord Jesus Christ chose for the instruments of that most amazing revolution in the religious systems of mankind, men perfectly illiterate,

and taken out of the lowest classes of the people? your answer to this will serve equally for an answer to that other question — why did the Holy Spirit choose to deliver such important truths in the barbarous idiom of a few obscure Galileans, and not in the politer and more harmonious strains of Grecian eloquence? I repeat it, the answer to both questions is the same — That it might appear, beyond contradiction, that the excellency of the power was of God, and not of man.

“Can it be accounted more strange that the Holy Spirit should, by the prophet Amos, address us in the style of a shepherd, and by Daniel, in that of a courtier, than that by the one he should speak to us in Hebrew, and by the other in Chaldee? It is as reasonable to think, that the Spirit of God would accommodate himself to the phraseology and diction, as to the tone of voice and pronunciation, of those whom he was pleased to enlighten; for it cannot be denied, that the pronunciation of one person in uttering a prophecy, might be more articulate, more audible, and more affecting, than that of another, in like manner as one style has more harmony, elegance, and perspicuity than another.”*

If the writings of the apostles, considered in a literary point of view, were bad, their extempore discourses must have been worse; because all men who can write at all, can write better than they can speak. The Holy Spirit suggested religious truth to their minds, but left them to publish that truth to the world in their own proper style of speaking and writing. Had he suggested the very words also in which that truth should be conveyed to others, no doubt the language would have been good, and the style uniform. That system of religious truth which the apostles received from the Holy Ghost, we have received from their writings; any man, therefore, who can read, may soon acquire all that learning for which they were indebted to inspiration.

During the two first centuries, the christian ministers

* Campbell on the Gospels. Dissertation First.

in general were illiterate men : " We may here remark," says Mosheim, " in general, that the apostolic fathers, and the other writers, who, in the infancy of the church, employed their pens in the cause of christianity, were neither remarkable for their learning, nor their eloquence. On the contrary, they express the most pious and admirable sentiments in the plainest and most illiterate style. This indeed, is rather a matter of honour, than of reproach to the christian cause; since we see, from the conversion of a great part of mankind to the gospel by the ministry of weak and illiterate men, that the progress of christianity is not to be attributed to human means, but to a divine power." *

" The method of teaching the sacred doctrines of religion, was at this time, most simple, far removed from all the subtle rules of philosophy, and all the precepts of human art. This appears abundantly, not only in the writings of the apostles, but also in all those of the second century, which have survived the ruins of time. Neither did the apostles, or their disciples, ever think of collecting into a regular system the principal doctrines of the christian religion, or of demonstrating them in a scientific or geometrical order. The beautiful and candid simplicity of these early ages, rendered such philosophical niceties unnecessary; and the great study of those who embraced the gospel, was rather to express its divine influence in their dispositions and actions, than to examine its doctrines with an excessive curiosity, or to explain them by the rules of human wisdom." †

The same historian remarks, that, in the second century, " The christian system, as it was hitherto taught, preserved its native and beautiful simplicity, and was comprehended in a small number of articles. The public teachers inculcated no other doctrines than those that are contained in what is commonly called the Apostles' Creed: and, in the method of illustrating

* Eccles. Hist., cent. i., part. 2, chap. ii., sect. 22.

† Mosheim, cent. i., part. 2, chap. iii., sect. 3.

them, all vain subtleties, all mysterious researches, everything that was beyond the reach of common capacities, were carefully avoided. This will by no means appear surprising to those who consider, that, at this time, there was not the least controversy about those capital doctrines of christianity, which were afterwards so keenly debated in the church; and who reflect, that the bishops of these primitive times were, for the most part, plain and illiterate men, remarkable rather for their piety and zeal, than for their learning and eloquence.

“This venerable simplicity was not, indeed, of a long duration; its beauty was gradually effaced by the laborious efforts of human learning, and the dark subtleties of imaginary science. Acute researches were employed upon several religious subjects, concerning which ingenious decisions were pronounced; and, what was worst of all, several tenets of a chimerical philosophy were imprudently incorporated into the christian system.”*

In the third century, “the famous question concerning the excellence and utility of human learning was debated with great warmth among the christians; and the contending parties in this controversy, seemed hitherto of equal force in point of numbers, or nearly so. Many recommended the study of philosophy, and an acquaintance with the Greek and Roman literature; while others maintained, that these were pernicious to the interests of genuine christianity, and the progress of true piety. The cause of letters and philosophy triumphed, however, by degrees; and those who wished well to them, gained ground more and more, till at length the superiority was manifestly decided in their favour.”†

How did these learned gentry explain christianity? — “The christian doctors who had applied themselves to the study of letters and philosophy, soon abandoned

* Mosheim, cent. ii., part 2, chap. iii., sect. 1, 2.

† Ibid., cent. iii., part 2, chap. i., sect. 5.

the frequented paths, and struck out into the devious wilds of fancy. The Egyptians distinguished themselves in this new method of explaining the truth. They looked upon it as a noble and glorious task, to bring the doctrines of celestial wisdom into a certain subjection to the precepts of their philosophy, and to make deep and profound researches into the intimate nature of those truths which the divine Saviour had delivered to his disciples. Origen was at the head of this speculative tribe. This great man, enchanted by the charms of the Platonic philosophy, set it up as the test of all religion, and imagined that the reasons of each doctrine were to be found in that favourite philosophy, and their nature and extent to be determined by it. It must be confessed, that he handled this matter with modesty and with caution; but he still gave an example to his disciples, the abuse of which, could not fail to be pernicious, and under the authority of which, they would naturally indulge themselves without restraint in every wanton fancy. And so, indeed, the case was, for the disciples of Origen, breaking forth from the limits fixed by their master, interpreted, in the most licentious manner, the divine truths of religion according to the tenor of the Platonic philosophy. From these teachers the philosophical, or scholastic theology, as it is called, derives its origin."*

How did they defend christianity? "The methods now used of defending christianity, and attacking Judaism and idolatry, degenerated much from the primitive simplicity, and the true rule of controversy. The christian doctors who had been educated in the schools of the rhetoricians and sophists, rashly employed the arts and evasions of their subtle masters in the service of christianity; and, intent only upon defeating the enemy, they were too little attentive to the means of victory, indifferent whether they acquired it by artifice or plain dealing. This method of disputing, which the ancients called *oeconomical*, and which had

* Mosheim, cent. iii., part 2, chap. iii., sec. 1.

victory for its object, rather than truth, was, in consequence of the prevailing taste for rhetoric and sophistry, almost universally approved." *

Let the advocates for the necessity of human learning in ministers of the gospel, look at the above facts and be humbled. During the most pure and prosperous period of the church, its ministers were illiterate. When a learned ministry came into fashion, it was employed in corrupting the simplicity, and sullyng the purity, of christian doctrine and manners.

God made choice of illiterate men to propagate the christian faith, that the glory of their success might be attributed to his co-operation. And when churchmen have to contend with infidels, they employ this argument in a triumphant manner. But when uneducated men now turn many to righteousness, their success is ascribed to the devil, to novelty, to ranterism, or to anything rather than a divine influence !

The introduction of human learning into the church of Christ, led its ministers to imitate the heathen orators, in a pompous enunciation of the subject of discourse, and the method of handling it; in an extravagant profusion of figure and metaphor for the sake of ornament; and in nicely adjusted and well turned periods, to give ease and grace to the whole composition. This new way of preaching soon became general, for the following reasons : —

First. It encouraged idleness. It is much easier to select and put together a few fine phrases, than to furnish valuable matter. Upon the new plan it was quite unimportant, whether the thoughts were vigorous or feeble, — they were lost in the language : — nature was convulsed, and the earth groaned to her centre, whether the preacher was describing the death of an insect, or the dissolution of the universe.

Secondly. It encouraged pride. The preacher was admired and almost adored. If he only delivered unintelligible jargon, he had the reputation of being

* Mosheim, cent. iii., p. 2, chap. iii., sect. 10.

learned, because he was not understood ; and he felt all the self-importance and self-complacency of conscious superiority. The general prevalence of this sort of preaching was the triumph of learning over common sense, and not over ignorance.

The reader will be struck with the coincidence betwixt the preaching of these innovators and that of modern divines. The subject is pompously announced : " We shall first prove this point, and secondly, that. To establish the first particular, we shall call your attention to three things. And, first," etc. The discourse is decked out with the most splendid imagery, and set off with a few scraps of Latin from some heathen moralist or poet. The tone and gesture of the preacher are in unison with his sermon, and show that his object is not to convert his hearers, but to gain their admiration ; their business, therefore, is to see how he acquits himself ; and when the service is over, they observe one to another, " A fine man ! A most excellent discourse ! I dare say he has been college-bred ! O ! neighbour Clod, can you let me have a bushel of oats for my horse ?" Thus the fine man and his fine discourse are dismissed ; for when no plain and pointed address is made to the conscience, the heart remains unaffected.

The primitive preachers gave all the riches of the kingdom of God in unadorned language ; their discourses were treasures in earthen vessels ; their object was not to please, but to profit their hearers ; not to exalt themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; they sent their auditors away not praising the preachers, but repenting of their sins, and steadfastly purposing to lead a new life. The bishops, when not railing against enthusiasts, will sometimes advise the clergy to study simplicity and perspicuity of style, that the poor may enjoy the benefit of their ministrations ; but this is seldom attended to, for mental imbecility and vanity are both on the side of pomposity, while the grace of God and a vigorous intellect are necessary to enable a minister to conform to the primitive pattern.

It is freely admitted, however, that learning may be useful to a pious minister, though it is not necessary to a profitable discharge of his duties. On a review, it will appear, that literature has done more harm than good in the church. If it be said that the mischief has been owing to the bad hands into which it has fallen, I reply, that there is still danger lest it should injure the cause it is intended to support ; on which account we should be cautious not to over-rate its importance.

But, admitting learning to be of all the importance that many pretend, what right have the clergy of the church of England, to speak contemptuously of the literary attainments of the ministers among the secedaries ? A very great number of the officiating clergy never saw an university, and, of course possess no advantages of education superior to their dissenting brethren. Many of those who visit Cambridge and Oxford pay but little attention to their books ; and the few that are industrious, read more heathen than christian authors ; hence the best educated among them possess but few qualifications for the ministry of the gospel. At the academies of the dissenters, the young gentlemen are kept to their books, and every branch of their education has reference to their future destination ; hence, in general, they have more solid christian learning than churchmen. Add to this, that many of the clergy, after having finished their education, seldom apply to their books, but spend their time in hunting, shooting, card-playing, etc., while dissenting ministers are generally shut up in their studies for several hours every day, and it can no longer be problematical which has the advantage in point of literature.

Though many of the itinerant preachers among the Wesleyan Methodists, commence their career with few other attainments than those of a purely religious nature, yet most of them soon rise to literary eminence. The itinerants are selected from among the local preachers, and many of these are men of parts as well as piety. If an uneducated man, therefore, did not possess very

superior natural abilities, he could not attain to that distinction among his brethren, which is necessary to obtain an appointment to a more extensive field of action. This man is put under the care of a senior, who superintends his studies, and his progress in learning is astonishing ; hence it is, that a youth, taken from the ploughtail, soon rises superior to his calumniators.

The societies of the sectaries are so constituted, that all the talent they possess is called into action ; and the most honourable and lucrative situations among them are at the command of superior abilities ; here is a stimulus to exertion ! The church is the reverse of all this. It is become proverbial, and certainly has much truth in it, that a gentleman who has several sons, will select the greatest dunce and send him to college to make him a parson. Great abilities are not necessary to secure the best situations in the church. Reading and writing are sufficient to qualify a man to discharge clerical duties. To obtain a living, he must dance attendance on patrons ; and to obtain a bishopric, let him “ preach before royalty.” Where is the wonder, when these things are considered, that the conventicle should possess more literature than the church ?

“ Men in general,” says Mr. Wesley, “ are under a great mistake with regard to what is called the learned world. They do not know, they cannot easily imagine, how little learning there is among them. I do not speak of abstruse learning, but what all divines, at least of any note, are supposed to have, namely, the knowledge of the tongues, at least, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and of the common arts and sciences.

“ How few men of learning, so called, understand Hebrew, even so far as to read a plain chapter in Genesis ! Nay, how few understand Greek ! Make an easy experiment. Desire that grave man who is urging this objection, only to tell you the English of the first paragraph that occurs in one of Plato’s Dialogues. I am afraid we may go farther still. How few understand Latin ! Give one of them an epistle of Tully, and see how readily he will explain it without

his dictionary. If he can hobble through that, 'tis odds but a Georgic in Virgil, or a Satire of Persius sets him fast.

“ And with regard to the arts and sciences, how few understand so much as the general principles of Logic ! Can one in ten of the clergy, or of the masters of arts in either university, when an argument is brought, tell you even the mood and figure wherein it is proposed, or complete an Enthymème ? Can one in ten of them demonstrate a problem or theorem in Euclid's Elements ? or define the common terms used in Metaphysics ? or intelligibly explain the first principles of it ? Why then will they pretend to that learning, which they are conscious to themselves they have not ? ” *

As to any display of learning by the clergy in public prayer, that is out of the question : all the learning exhibited, is a bare ability to read. And as to the liturgy itself, however it may be admired for the devotional spirit which runs through it, no man of taste will commit himself so far as to affect to applaud it for the elegance of its composition. Numerous examples of vulgarity might be given. Churchmen supplicate victory over the great enemy of their salvation, in such terms as these : “ Beat down Satan under our feet.” Had these words not been in the liturgy, and had a Methodist preacher used them in the meeting, it would soon have been published in the newspapers, that “ an enthusiast, in the heat of his devotions, conceived of the supreme Being as engaged in pugilistic warfare with his sable majesty, and piously besought the Almighty to knock the devil down.”

It is difficult to conceive how a churchman has disposed of his modesty, when he has the assurance to call the extempore prayers of the Methodists enthusiastic rant. When did a company of fanatics at the meeting, rave one against another in such language as the following : “ We beseech thee to hear us good Lord ! Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us !

* Wesley's Appeals, part iii., pp. 252, 253.

Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us! O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace! O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us! O Christ hear us! O Christ hear us! Lord have mercy upon us! Lord have mercy upon us! Christ have mercy upon us! Christ have mercy upon us! Lord have mercy upon us! Lord have mercy upon us!" This language indicates a state of feeling bordering on distraction; it is abominably hypocritical when used by a cold frozen-hearted formalist; it cannot suit the states of a whole congregation; and the greatest extravagances of Methodism may be pronounced sober and rational when compared with it.*

As to preaching, it must require greater abilities to deliver a discourse extempore, than to read it; in the pulpit, therefore, a dissenter appears to greater advantage than a churchman. Besides, when a clergyman happens to read a decent sermon, he has very little credit of it; for there are so many advertisements in the papers, of sets of fashionable discourses for the accommodation of the idle, that it is often shrewdly suspected he did not come honestly by it. That dissenters preach much the best sermons, is proved by their getting much the largest congregations. People in general have a partiality for the church, and run in crowds to it when the pulpit is occupied by a man of abilities; but this is seldom the case, and hence the general complaint, that the conventicle is filled and the church deserted.

Objection 1. The dissenters are followed, not because they are learned, but because they pretend to superior sanctity, and thereby impose upon and delude the ignorant.

Dissenters do not, and cannot, make greater profes-

* There is some force in this remark, as it must be a rare case indeed, that can make such language applicable to a whole congregation; yet still, Mr. Isaac's view is too strong, as many eminent for their devotion, taste and learning, look on these passages in a very different light.—EDIT.

sions than churchmen. Is a dissenter inspired? A churchman is "moved by the Holy Ghost." Is the society constituted according to the institutions of Christ? "The church of England is the most pure and apostolical church in Christendom." Do dissenters promise great spiritual helps? Churchmen are all pardoned and regenerated in baptism; they receive a sign of the divine favour from the bishop in confirmation, and a pledge of it in the Lord's supper; they receive absolution from all their sins, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when sick; and, no matter what their lives have been, they all die "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life." If the people, therefore, were guided by professions and promises, our good and venerable old mother would not have to weep over one lost or disobedient son.

Objection 2. The dissenters draw people from the church by railing against the clergy.

Let facts speak upon this subject. Look over the monthly catalogues of new publications, for many years past, and to one work written against the establishment, you will find, perhaps, fifty written against the different sects. At the meeting you will seldom hear the church mentioned, except to cite with approbation her articles and homilies. But go and hear the clergy: it is no matter whether the preacher be evangelical or rational in his creed, good or bad in his conduct, he must have a blow at Methodism. If railing, therefore, is to carry the day, the meeting may be shut up immediately; the dissenters stand no better chance in contending with churchmen, than Michael did in disputing with the devil. Sterne has wittily remarked, that the reason why he dare not bring a railing accusation was, had they got to railing, Beelzebub would have been more than a match for the archangel.

Objection 3. They are generally the poor and ignorant who are seduced from the church, and these are not qualified to judge of the abilities of the clergy.

This objection was urged against our Lord : " This people who know not the law are cursed." If the seceders from the church are so ignorant that they cannot appreciate the merits of the clergy, what benefit have they derived from a pretended learned ministry ? Whose business was it to have made them wiser ? At the meeting they are both instructed and reformed, and this shows who are the best preachers. But though those who leave the church are generally ignorant, which is not much to the credit of the clergy, yet they are not the most ignorant of churchmen. The poor miserable creatures, clothed in rags, and sunk in vice, who are only about one degree removed from the savage state, are stanch friends of the church. Whenever an army has been raised to defend the hierarchy, the troops have been of this description. The lowest of the rabble have been collected, made drunk, marched to the meeting, and set on by the champions of orthodoxy, to huzza, curse, and swear, pelt stones and rotten eggs, break windows, and wound peaceable worshippers, in defence of an apostolic church and learned clergy, to the glory of God, and the honour of our most excellent establishment !

Objection 4. It is not by learning that the people have been drawn from the church, but by violent vociferation, and the most alarming and unnatural gesticulation, such as brawling damnation in their ears, smiting with the hand, stamping with the foot, etc.

Indeed ! And have all the sober and learned instructions of the clergy come to this ! A man may sit at their feet for years, and be wise in all the learning of the church ; but, it seems, the moment he hears the voice of an enthusiast, his brains run round like a whirligig ; he sees visions, dreams dreams, feels inspired, and is ready for a strait jacket ! If such be the effect, some people will suspect that he was more than half cracked before the Methodist began to operate upon him. No sensible man can be moved to anything but pity, or contempt, by the ravings of ignorance ; and, therefore, none but fools

can be gained by it: and the great abilities of the clergy are employed to very little purpose, if the most extravagant of fanatics can produce the greatest defection from the church.

If the clergy seriously believe that ranterism is so wonderfully successful, it may merit their consideration, whether it would not be a measure of prudence to meet the devil upon his own ground, and fight him with his own weapons. From the specimens some of them have given, there is reason to believe that they would soon become proficient in this mode of warfare; for, though sufficiently dull upon common topics, when they treat upon enthusiasm, fanaticism, etc., the wildness of their stare, and the extravagance of their language, are sufficient to inspire with alarm and terror minds the most inert and stoical.

There are circumstances which betray a disposition in some of the clergy not very favourable to learning. Old Lord Halifax told Dr. Echard that, in his book, "Of the Contempt of the Clergy," he had not hit upon the true reason of it, namely, the knowledge of the laity. To which the Doctor readily replied, "God be thanked, there is ignorance enough still among the laity to support the authority of the clergy."* The archbishop of Canterbury thought Lord Sidmouth's bill would promote the respectability of the dissenters, by keeping ignorant persons out of the ministry. If the clergy really wish the teachers among the different sects to become a learned body of men, why shut them out of the universities? They have long complained that the terms of admission to these seats of learning are contrary to their consciences, and imposed with a view to their exclusion. When obstacles are thrown in the way of their education, and their supposed want of it made the pretence for abridging their religious privileges by acts of parliament, it is easy to see that their enemies are contriving, not how to promote their respectability, but their destruction;

* Rights of the Christian Church, p. 268.

it is like first cutting off a man's legs, and then knocking out his brains because he cannot walk.

The Lancasterian system of education, which is founded upon the most liberal principles, and calculated to banish ignorance out of the land, has had no enemies to encounter but the clergy; and their opposition has been upon church principles. That the state is under no apprehension is certain, for Lancaster obtained the approbation and patronage of his majesty, and the royal family, and the principal of the nobility. When the clergy saw that their senseless clamour could not prevail against the good sense of the nation, they set up rival schools, founded upon sectarian principles, which exclude the children of dissenters.

Thus, those who affect to pity our ignorance, and would provide against the effects of it by legislative acts, shut us out of their national schools and universities!

Even the Bible society, which bids fair to illuminate and convert the world, has met with no open and avowed enemies of any consequence, except the clergy, whose church is in danger, in their own apprehension, from the circulation of the sacred scriptures, when unaccompanied by a prayer-book.

That boasted learning of the clergy produces no practical effect, if we may judge of other dioceses by the diocese of Durham: witness the following advertisement, which appeared in the Newcastle papers:—

“At a Meeting of the Clergy of the diocese of Durham, held at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on Thursday, the 5th day of September, 1811,

“The Rev. the Archdeacon of Durham in the chair,

“It was resolved,—

“First. That ignorance of religion, and a consequent disregard of its awful sanctions, may be reckoned among the chief causes of that profligacy which justly excites universal alarm.

Secondly. That an increased attention to the religious education of all the classes of society, and most particularly of the infant poor, is the only remedy that

can be applied to this evil, with any hope of bringing about a permanent and effectual reformation." They then proceed to recommend the institution of schools upon Dr. Bell's plan, as the remedy for the evil of which they complain.

What a sermon would the shaver have preached from such a text as this? That the education of the poor upon Dr. Bell's plan, might be one means of bringing about a reformation of manners may be admitted; but that it is the only method which can be employed with any hope of success, is very surprising! It seems to follow as a necessary corollary, that they have no hope of producing any real or lasting good by their praying and preaching. With what conscience can these holy alarmists share among themselves a yearly revenue of about £200,000 for teaching morality, when, according to their own confession, they cannot persuade the people to practise it. A physician who should continue to attend his patients merely to swell his bill, after he had lost all hopes of doing them any good, would deserve public contempt.

Observe, reader, this opinion of the inefficacy of their ministrations is not expressed by a solitary individual, but by the clergy of a whole diocese. It could not escape as an inadvertency, because they were convened for the express purpose of taking into consideration the state of morals in the diocese, and the above is given, after the strictest scrutiny, as their deliberate judgment.

There are a few words in this advertisement of ambiguous import. The profligacy complained of, is stated to have excited universal alarm. The alarmists, it is presumed, are not to be identified with the profligates; and if all are terrified at sin, who are the sinners? If we take the uneducated poor to be the profligates intended, then we may suppose the clergy, and the higher orders of the laity, to be the persons seized with this panic. But why are their fears excited at the vices of the lower orders of society? Is it not notorious, to speak modestly, that the poor are kept in

countenance by the example of the rich ? If this alarm be about the future consequences of immorality, it may justly be retorted, "Weep not for us, but weep for yourselves." If the effects of vice upon civil society be dreaded, the clergy ought not to oppose the exertions of those who have turned thousands to righteousness, when, by their tacit confession, their own labours can avail nothing towards the restoration of moral order.

It is an old and just observation, that truth is mighty and will prevail. Religious truth, it has been shown, may be understood with ease ; it may, therefore, be explained and defended without difficulty. I never knew a man, however great his parts, engage in controversy from a conviction of his being in the right, who did not place more dependence upon the goodness of his cause, than upon the splendour of his abilities. It is astonishing to see how an unlettered person, with truth on his side, will foil an opponent of the greatest talents. To instance only in one particular. The clergy generally commence their attack against the Methodists on the subject of inspiration. They endeavour to persuade people that inspiration has ceased since the days of the apostles, and that the Methodists are enthusiasts and fanatics for pretending to it. There is not an old woman among them but can reply : "Did not you, sir, profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost, when you received priest's orders ? Do not you pray in your synagogues every sabbath-day : 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from us — cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit — send down upon all bishops and curates, and all congregations committed to their charge, the healthful Spirit of thy grace.' The Methodists, do not pretend to more inspiration than this ; the charge, therefore, of enthusiasm and fanaticism, attaches as much to you as to them. If inspiration, as you pretend, has ceased, the Methodists, though mistaken, are sincere ; whereas you are playing the hypocrite, and sinning with your eyes wide open." No advantages of education can

avail anything in so plain a case ; and upon this ground, where so many laurels have been won, the feeblest stripling in the ranks of Methodism, will fearlessly encounter the greatest Goliath of the church. Let truth only have fair play, and with the most trifling aid from literature, she will soon bring down to the ground the Babel of error, though it be supported by all the learning in the world.

If the church of England be, as the clergy say, the most pure and apostolic church in Christendom, and her ministers the most virtuous and learned body of men in the world ; if the churches of the dissenters be founded in error, and their ministers ignoramuses, why are the clergy perpetually roaring, the church is in danger ? It always affords me much amusement to hear a visitation sermon. In the former part of the discourse the parties are flattered for their parts and piety, and the church adored, as built upon a rock, enjoying the divine protection, and bidding an insulting defiance to the gates of hell. By and by, however, my ears are stunned with a cry, — the church is in danger ! Gracious heavens ! I have said to myself, what is the matter ? Has her God forsaken her ? It is discovered, that this impregnable fortress is tottering upon a sandy foundation ! What gigantic foe has made his appearance and menaced her destruction ? I listen with attention and anxious expectations, and at last gather from the incoherent harangue, that a few noisy creatures without arms or sense, are led on by the prince of darkness to storm the church. More astonishing still ! I only reply to all such orators : Is not God more than a match for the devil ? Is not learning able to cope with ignorance ? If you take the affirmative, you may dismiss your fears ; if the negative, you give error and ignorance the advantage of truth and learning, and thereby make a liberal education of no value to a minister.

It is sometimes said, to the praise of the clergy, that during the dark ages, the little learning which was preserved in the world, was to be found principally in

monasteries and religious establishments, among the sacred orders. The fact is not denied ; but what was the reason ? Was it not a favourite tenet of the church, that ignorance is the mother of devotion ? Did not the clergy, on this very principle, keep the people as ignorant as possible ? And after they had introduced universal darkness among the laity, is it much to their credit that they preserved a few glimmerings of light among themselves, by which they might profitably practise their impositions on the deluded vulgar ?

Much confusion has prevailed on the subject of this essay, by not distinguishing betwixt the learning which is immediately related to christianity, and that which is unconnected with it. A man who understands jurisprudence is entitled to the appellation of learned gentleman ; but he is no more qualified by his legal knowledge to teach christianity, than to give lectures on agriculture. That sort of learning which serves to explain the scriptures, ought to be studied by a minister ; but that which is foreign to his profession, may very well be dispensed with : — we do not deem a man unqualified to teach music, merely because he is ignorant of Newton's theory of colours.

As christian ministers, the greater part of the learning of the clergy is of no use to them at all.

By learning Latin, they become acquainted with the heathen moralists ; but this does not assist them either to explain or enforce christian precepts. In many instances, the lax morality of the old philosophers has been recommended from our pulpits, instead of the pure and sublime virtue of the gospel ; and it has been enforced by considerations gathered from the pagan writers, such as, the nature and fitness of things, the beauty of virtue, and deformity of vice, the pleasure of a good life, and miseries of a bad one ; while the scriptural principles and motives of obedience have been lost sight of, such as, the love of God, the death of Christ, the aids and comforts of the Holy Ghost and future rewards and punishments.

The mathematics form a principal branch of educa-

tion at our universities. When a young man has demonstrated every proposition of Euclid, he has not proved one doctrine or duty of christianity. Astronomy should be understood by sailors, and makers of almanacs; but it is of very little use to a christian minister; his business is not with the laws of the heavenly bodies, but with the moral government of God: it is not to trace the motions of planets and comets through the heavens, but to direct the motions of men in a new and living way to eternal felicity. Algebra will assist us in bringing to light hidden quantities, but it will afford us no aid in developing the mysteries of our holy religion.

The caution of the apostle, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy," is as necessary now as ever. The modern method of philosophising has made more fools and infidels, than christians. The cant about the laws of nature, and the works of nature, which is now generally adopted, is the invention of atheists to explain the phenomena of creation and providence, without any reference to the supreme Being. Nature, they say, has contrived this, and done that. But what is this nature, that is so full of wisdom and energy? Is it a real being, or a nonentity? If the former, wherein does it differ from the divinity? If the latter, how can it either think or act at all?

Not a few christians have learned to philosophise away divine providence. The world, it is pretended, is governed by general laws which were made at the creation, when a force was impressed upon them sufficient to keep them in perpetual operation till the end of time. Hence the idea of a particular providence is ridiculed by many clergymen, as well as by deists and atheists. Such a representation may very well suit an epicurean deity, whose happiness consists in idleness. At night heat your oven, and put in your dough; you may go to bed and sleep soundly; it requires no superintendence; by the regular operation of the laws of nature, the bread will be sufficiently baked by morning. An admirable scheme of providence for a

sleepy god ! If it would not be deemed too presumptuous, I would ask these dogmatisers, whether it required a fatiguing exertion of deity to create the world ; and if not, how it can disturb his repose to be perpetually employed in the government of it. If everything was contrived and fitted beforehand, what is that force which the Almighty, in the beginning, impressed upon his laws, to keep them in perpetual operation ? Did he detach his omnipotence from himself, and hang it like a clock weight, to the wheels of nature to prevent their standing still ? If God never specially interferes, but has left the laws of nature to regulate everything ; I should be glad to know what law of nature inspired holy men to write the sacred volume ? and whether it would not be more philosophical, in time of need, to pray to the laws of nature, than to God ? I am very much afraid that this new scheme of providence would deprive us of religion, the Bible, and the prime perfections of deity.

If the studies of ministers were directed to subjects immediately connected with the duties of their profession, no man could say more warmly than myself, " Make them as learned as possible." But to call that sort of learning a qualification for the ministry, which neither improves our knowledge of the doctrines of christianity, nor promotes our practice of its precepts, is as absurd as to affirm, that a man who has only learned to make a cart wheel, is qualified to make a watch.

Many people speak on the subject of the learning of the clergy, as though the nation would be in danger of relapsing into a state of barbarism, if the ministers of religion were not profoundly versed in all the arts and sciences. How ridiculous is this ! Do people go to church to learn arts and sciences ? Are they there instructed in mechanics, geography, history, astronomy, drawing, music, etc. ? If the clergy could teach anything in the pulpit besides religion, it would surely be oratory ; but their practice of reading is inconsistent with the grace and energy of an accomplished speaker ; hence the young gentlemen who are am-

bitious of shining in that department, attend at the bar and the senate, rather than at the church, for examples of rhetorical skill. Those who are interested in the arts and sciences will cultivate them, and carry them on towards perfection, whether the clergy know anything or nothing about them; and it is to these persons we owe most of the great improvements made in them, of which we so justly boast.

A good judge, on the subjects of science and learning in general, has observed: "Without entering into an invidious and particular examination of the subject, we may cursorily observe, that the public has not, of late at least, been indebted for the greatest improvements in science and learning, to all the doctors, both the proctors, nor to all the heads of colleges and halls laid together. That populous university, London, and that region of literary labour, Scotland, have seized every palm of scholastic honour, and left the sons of Oxford and Cambridge, to enjoy substantial comforts in the smoke of the common or combination room. The bursars' books are the only manuscripts of any value produced in many colleges; and the sweets of pensions, exhibitions, fines, fellowships, and petty offices, the chief objects of academical pursuits." He goes on to state, that though every candidate for a degree "is obliged to be examined in the whole circle of the sciences by three masters of arts," yet the fact is, that "the greatest dunce usually gets his *testimonium* signed with as much ease and credit, as the finest genius. The poor young man to be examined in the sciences often knows no more of them than his bed-maker, and the masters who examine, are sometimes equally unacquainted with such mysteries."*

Christianity is a practical system of religion; and the business of a minister is to make his hearers practical christians. If he fail to do this, he may be learned in Latin, in law, in philosophy, in mathematics, etc., but he is not a learned divine. Suppose a medical gentleman were to deliver lectures on the

* Knox's Essays, No. 77.

healing art, in language the most pure and elegant; suppose you could collect from his lectures that he understood Latin, Greek, Arabic, etc., yet after all, if he could perform no cures, he would not be called a learned physician. Suppose another man could not lecture half so eloquently, and were perfectly ignorant of all languages except his mother-tongue, if he were more successful in practice, he would justly be deemed the wisest doctor. The clergy have the cure of souls, just the same as physicians have the cure of bodies; and as the doctor who can heal no diseases must be an ignorant quack, so the minister who can convert no sinners must be an ignorant divine.

Let us then bring the subject to the proper test. No man can be properly qualified for the ministry, who is not successful in it; and his success is to be estimated by the moral influence of his discourses upon the hearts and lives of his auditors. There may be much fine writing in his sermon; it may be adorned with the most enchanting imagery, and every period may be well turned; there may be some very learned criticisms, and the whole may be delivered in a very gentleman-like style; but, after all, if no moral good be effected, the end of the minister is not answered, and the preacher has only been taking much pains to demonstrate his own folly. His business is to make his hearers virtuous; and he betrays his ignorance when he loses sight of this, or when his sermons are not best adapted to promote it.

It is not even pretended, that zeal for the glory of God, and salvation of men, is the chief motive which actuates most young men who enter into holy orders in the establishment. A youth is sent to school, and afterwards to college, to prepare for the ministry; not because his mind is crucified to the world; and wholly devoted to God; — not because he burns, with holy ardour, to lead his fellow-men, in the paths of piety and virtue, to eternal glory; but because there is a valuable living in the gift of the family, or he has a promise of the next presentation from some noble patron; or he

is too simple to gain a livelihood in any other profession. In such a case it signifies nothing if his morals and disposition are both opposed to the ministry; he must qualify for it, and then engage in it. But how does he qualify? By studying the art of training up immortal souls for heaven? Such a thought never once enters into his head! No wonder, therefore, that he does no good. The young men among the dissenters selected for the ministry, are generally persons of good natural parts and undoubted piety; who engage in the sacred employment, not from necessity, but choice: their chief study is to save souls; in this art they soon become proficient; and hence their great success.

To talk about the years spent in preparation for the ministry, and the knowledge acquired in grammar, logic, rhetoric, dead languages, philosophy, and mathematics, is quite beside the point, if the preacher has not learned the art of making men holy, just, and good. Suppose a youth were to spend seven years in learning the art of shoemaking, and when he had done, could not make a pair of shoes; would he not be taken for a blockhead? How amusing it would be to see this dunce put on all the airs of a learned crispin, and to hear him dilate with professional consequence on his seven years' studies. He heard of some Latin authors, who had written well upon the art; he determined, therefore, to study Latin, that he might benefit by their labours. To qualify himself to take measure and cut out, he applied himself to geometry. Observing leather to be elastic, he studied philosophy to find out the cause of it; at first he inclined to the Cartesian hypothesis, but, afterwards, saw reason to believe that the elastic force of the air is the principle of elasticity in all other bodies. If this man's parade of learning be ridiculous, because he cannot make a pair of shoes; is it not equally silly to hear a minister boast of his literary acquirements, when he has not learned the only business belonging to his profession, which is to make men virtuous.

In all other employments, he who does his work best, is esteemed the most skilful workman ; and it is just as true that he who makes the best christians is the most learned divine. If a tinker convert more sinners from the error of their ways than a bishop, he is more learned, in spite of his dirty face and apron, than the episcopal gentleman with all his robes of sacerdotal importance. " He that winneth souls is wise."

ESSAY V.

ON MINISTERIAL QUALIFICATIONS.

WHEN a knowledge of christianity is said to be the only qualification absolutely necessary to a minister of the gospel, the proposition requires explanation. Virtue is as necessary as knowledge, but no wicked man can thoroughly understand the christian religion.

I. Virtue is necessary to a minister of the gospel. One great end of the institution of the ministerial office is to make men virtuous ; and no instructions are of any value, any further than as they tend to purify the heart and regulate the conduct. A mere knowledge of duty is not a sufficient inducement to men to practise it, or there would be no wilful sinners. Religion, therefore, must be enforced as well as explained. But no wicked man can press the motives of religion with sufficient earnestness : First. Because he does not feel their force upon his own mind. Secondly. Because conscious guilt must paralyse his exertions. Thirdly. Because his own conduct must destroy their influence upon the minds of his auditors.

" The carnal mind is enmity against God ; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." This is as true of the clergy as of the laity ; and hence, in the nature of things, a carnal priest cannot feel a disposition to convert sinners to piety and virtue ; on the contrary, he will do all in his power to prevent it. Our Lord complained of the wicked Jewish teachers,

that they prevented those from entering the kingdom of heaven who were about to enter; (Matt. xxiii. 13;) and the apostle lays it down as a principle, that he who is after the flesh will persecute him who is after the spirit; (Gal. iv. 29;) and that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. (2 Tim. iii. 12.) Ungodly priests have always betrayed as strong a disposition as any body of men whatever to persecute the righteous: to suppose, therefore, that they will seriously endeavour to make others virtuous, is as foolish as to expect that Satan will cast out Satan. With them genuine piety is cried down as enthusiasm and fanaticism; and strict morality, as preciseness and fleshly perfection.

There is an established order in the moral world as well as in the natural. The Almighty has no more appointed vice to propagate virtue, than he has appointed the frost of winter to produce vegetation. According to this established order, everything naturally generates its own kind. Vice begets vice; hence the scripture adage: "Like priest like people." The vices of a priest are very prolific; they produce some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold. The iniquities of the Jewish nation are traced to its teachers, as their origin: "The leaders of my people have caused them to err."

God has expressly forbidden wicked men to teach religion. "Unto the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and casteth my words behind thee." (Psalm i. 16, 17.) Our Saviour has cautioned his followers against them: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." (Matt. vii. 15, 16.) "By their fruits," cannot be meant, as some have thought, their doctrines, but their lives. Figurative as the passage is, it indicates, with sufficient clearness, that the false teacher, — the wolf in sheep's clothing, — is a hypocrite; we cannot, however,

infallibly infer the state of a man's mind from his preaching; if his doctrine be bad, he may sincerely believe it, in which case he is not guilty of hypocrisy. Besides, our Saviour goes on to describe the fate of these false prophets at the last day; and in this account their hypocrisy is not supposed to consist in a disagreement between their professions and doctrines, but between their professions and lives. "Not every one which saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Their orthodoxy is not disputed; they are allowed to plead, "Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" But the Judge will sternly reply, "I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity."

Wicked ministers must do infinite mischief. Hear the apostle's cutting expostulation with an immoral Jewish teacher: "Thou art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law. Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God?" (Rom. ii. 19, 24.) What was the effect of this man's preaching? "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." Such always has been, and always will be, the fruit of such a ministry.

The apostle Peter speaks to the same purpose: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves

swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." By what marks shall the people know these false teachers, who murder souls, and expose the truth of God to the ridicule and contempt of its enemies? "And through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandise of you?" (2 Peter ii. 1—3.) None but wicked men can enter the ministry from such a motive, and they can have no other. But the business must be varnished over with "feigned words." Hence the covetous priest, instead of avowing that he is prompted by "filthy lucre," feigns himself "moved by the Holy Ghost;" and instead of informing the people that he is a spiritual merchant, he pretends to be a spiritual doctor: his object is not to make merchandise of their souls, but to cure them. Those who credit these pretensions, "follow their pernicious ways," and perish; and those who discover the cheat, make christianity a party to it, and thus "the ways of truth are evil spoken of." What has a wicked priesthood done for France? It produced licentiousness of manners, and then infidelity; it generated those principles which ruined that country, and nearly all Europe; by defiling the altar, it destroyed the throne, and turned the land into a field of blood. When the consecrated profligates could profit by the mask no longer, they threw it off, and marched forward with brazen front to join the ranks of atheism.

It will, perhaps, be said, that the vices of the priest cannot lessen the obligations of the people to practise morality; they must do as he says, and not as he does. Obligation is not the question. The authority of divine law is independent of human conduct. The question is, can a priest who defies the authority of God, persuade the people to respect it? Attend to this point. A priest returns home drunk from a public meeting on Saturday night, and preaches next morning from, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and

stingeth like an adder." He is caught in bed with his neighbour's wife, and takes for his text, the following Sabbath, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." He is engaged in a law suit with his parishioners about tithes, and preaches from, "Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" Can any person be extravagant enough to believe that such a wretch can persuade the drunkard to become sober, the debauchee to become chaste, and the litigious to become peaceable? But he enforces his morality with the remark, "You must do as I say, and not as I do!" Well said! If Satan be capable of a blush, such a declaration could not fail to produce it. Only keep the profligate in countenance, by your example, for six days out of the seven, and your grave lectures on the Sabbath will teach them to make a jest of religion; thus, by precept and example, you will make and keep them impious and vicious, and so complete the character and ensure the perdition of the reprobates.

It is as necessary for a minister of religion to reprove sin, as to give instruction concerning duty. But a wicked man can never do this with effect. He will seldom attempt it at all. The dreaded retort of, "Physician, heal thyself," will effectually deter those who retain any sense of shame; and the infamous character of the man whose conscience is seared, as with a hot iron, by a long course of daring impiety and immorality, will completely neutralise the severity of his censure.

The divine co-operation is necessary to the success of the christian ministry. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So, then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that

giveth the increase. We, then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." Will God employ and assist a wicked man in the work of converting sinners from the error of their ways? Before this question be answered, one or two more must be considered. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" But, —

II. No wicked man can fully understand the christian religion. It is a very common and just observation, that no man can attain to eminence in any profession, who has not a taste for it. This observation is as applicable to a divine, as to a mechanic, a lawyer, or a physician. And no man can possibly have a taste for religion, who is in love with sin: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to his laws, neither indeed can be."

Worldly considerations will sometimes prompt a man to apply to a subject which is ungrateful to his feelings. A lad is put apprentice to a business which he dislikes, and his master compels him to pay some attention to it. When he sets up for himself, he soon becomes sensible that application is necessary to his subsistence; hence he does violence to his feelings, and endeavours to rise to mediocrity; but, except his disposition change, he never attains to distinction. The case of a vicious clergyman is different. During his apprenticeship at the university, he is under no obligation to study religion. By reading the Greek and Latin poets and historians, he may qualify himself to celebrate the mysteries of Bacchus and Venus; but other studies are requisite to prepare for the christian pulpit. A living may be obtained by being related to a patron, and by playing off a political squib against Jacobins, or a religious one against enthusiasts. The study of christianity is not necessary in order to a due discharge of clerical duties. The prayers are all ready for all occasions in the liturgy, and sets of fashionable discourses in the form of manuscript,

are to be met with in every bookseller's shop. Thus the necessity of studying our holy religion is superseded; and, as nothing short of absolute necessity could induce a profligate young spark to apply his mind to it, he will do duty, as the cant phrase is, without, properly speaking, knowing his duty.

A mind virtuously disposed is an essential requisite to the perception of christian truth. Our Lord represents vice and ignorance, virtue and knowledge, as inseparably connected together: "Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be discovered. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. None of the wicked shall understand." (John. iii. 19—21; vii. 17; Daniel xii. 10.)

Divine illumination is necessary to a right understanding of the word of God. When David opened the sacred volume, he put up this prayer: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Psalm cxix. 18.) Though the apostles enjoyed the privilege of hearing our Lord's public discourses, and his explanations of many of them in private, yet they knew but little of the nature of his religion, till after his resurrection, when it is observed, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." (Luke xxiv. 45.) The apostle Paul lays it down as a general truth, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

The church of England is strictly orthodox upon this point. She prays: "That it may please thee to illuminate all bishops, priests, and deacons, with true knowledge and understanding of thy word; and that, both by their preaching and living, they may set it

forth, and shew it accordingly." In the second part of the homily on the knowledge of holy scripture, a saying of Chrysostom is cited with approbation : " Chrysostom saith, that man's human and worldly wisdom, or science, needeth not to the understanding of scripture, but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them that with humility and diligence do search therefor." In the first part of the homily for Whitsunday, we are told that, " The Holy Ghost, because he doth instruct the hearts of the simple in the true knowledge of God and his word, is most justly termed by this name and title to be the Spirit of truth." Eusebius, in his ecclesiastical history, telleth a strange story of a certain learned and subtle philosopher, who, being an extreme adversary to Christ and his doctrine, could by no kinds of learning be converted to the faith ; but was able to withstand all the arguments that could be brought against him, with little or no labour. At length there started up a poor simple man of small wit and less knowledge, one that was reputed among the learned as an ideot ; and he, in God's name, would needs take in hand to dispute with this proud philosopher. The bishops and other learned men standing by, were marvellously abashed at the matter, thinking that by his doings they should be all confounded and put to open shame. He notwithstanding goeth on, and beginning in the name of the Lord Jesus, brought the philosopher to such a point in the end, contrary to all men's expectation, that he could not choose but acknowledge the power of God in his words, and to give place to the truth. Was not this a miraculous work, that one silly soul, of no learning, should do that which many bishops of great knowledge and understanding were never able to bring to pass ? After what has been said upon the subject, it is not necessary to prove here, that God will not grant his holy illumination to an unholy priest ; this has been proved repeatedly ; and the inference is, that no wicked man can understand the scriptures.

With the above explanation, which provides against the licentiousness of the pulpit, it may safely and confidently be affirmed, that he who understands christianity has a right, and is bound in duty, to teach it. Let a christian man then preach the same truths to others, which, through the blessing of God, enlightened his own mind and reformed his life; he will soon witness their efficacy in the conversion of sinners, and this success of his labours will be sufficient proof that God has called him to the sacred work. The apostle Paul proved to the Corinthians, and to all men, from the success of his ministry solely, without any written credentials, that he had authority from Christ to preach the gospel: "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men. Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." (2 Cor. iii. 1 — 3.) This reasoning will be equally conclusive in favour of any minister who can give proofs of usefulness; but if any man can convert sinners without the approbation and co-operation of God, the apostle's argument is good for nothing. In comparison of these living epistles, the apostle despised the written recommendation or orders, on which, it seems, the false teacher at Corinth set a high value. How many modern divines make a parade of holy orders, written with pen and ink, who can show no living epistles, written with the Spirit of the living God. The various denominations of dissenting ministers have reformed tens of thousands of profligates; and these evidences of their success must carry conviction to every ingenuous mind, that their ministry is of God. Those who traduce their character, and depreciate their labours, cannot stand a comparison with them in point of either morals or usefulness.

It is supposed by many people, that all are not au-

thorised to preach by the great head of the church, who are sufficiently qualified for the work by their piety and abilities. A select number, it is said, are specially designated to the holy employment by the Almighty, and solemnly set apart to it by the church ; these alone have, what is termed, a call to the ministry. All the rest are supposed to be excluded ; and therefore, should any of them, no matter how well qualified in other respects, presume to assume the sacred office, they are to be considered as sacrilegious intruders, who must answer for their temerity at the peril of their souls. As this is an error of considerable magnitude, it will be proper to take some pains to explode it.

A call to preach is variously explained by the different sects. A churchman who is a candidate for deacons' orders, professes to feel inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost. What the clergy mean by this declaration, it is difficult to say ; as they, almost to a man, denounce all feelings and impulses of the Holy Ghost as enthusiasm and fanaticism. How they can feel without feeling, and be moved without an impulse, will require some little ingenuity to explain. Till this be done, they can only evade the charge of enthusiasm and fanaticism at the expense of their honesty. Nelson has a remark similar to the well known one of Burnet upon this subject : " When a priest," says he, " enters into orders, only to entitle himself to a benefice, without any inward call from the Holy Ghost, if this is the case, (as I am afraid it too frequently happens,) then he speaks false in the presence of God, even upon the most solemn occasion, and this must be a sham dedication of himself to his service, and it is very improbable, that the God of truth should give any blessing to the services or ministry of such a person, who leaped into the church by a wilful and premeditated lie."*

Every pious man is under a divine influence ; but no one has any reason to expect any other motion to the

* Rights of the Clergy, page 408.

office of the ministry than to any other christian duty. It is the duty of every man to do all the good in his power. It is a good work to instruct the ignorant ; it is my duty, therefore, if I understand religion, to instruct those who do not. The obligation to teach, in this case, does not arise from the state of my feelings, but from my qualifications: suppose my feelings, instead of prompting me to the employment, were ever so much opposed to it, it is still my duty to mount the rostrum ; and the sense of duty ought to prompt me to action. It is the sense of duty which must give the impulse, and not the impulse the sense of duty, otherwise, by making our feelings the rule of our duty, we renounce the authority of the written word, and are lost in the wilds of fanaticism or the gloom of infidelity,—perhaps both.

What shocking work this doctrine of motions, being a rule of action, would produce, if it were applied to morals. An object of distress solicits my charity : I have plenty of money, but I am covetous ; I therefore feel no motion to part with it, and am, consequently, under no obligation to relieve the indigent. Again : because I love money, it is ten to one but I feel an impulse to take a few pounds out of my neighbour's desk ; my motion makes it a duty, and I should feel a guilty conscience were I to withhold my hand.

You will perhaps object, and say, "But these things are sinful, and therefore you ought not to regard your impulses." I deny it. Impulse is my rule of action, and my impulse does not say that these things are sinful. "True," you will reply, "but the word of God does." Certainly. "By the law," not impulse, "is the knowledge of sin," as well as duty. Here then we have got to the point. If the word of God informs me what I am to avoid, and what I am to do, an impulse, or the absence of it, can neither add to my obligation nor diminish from it. It is my duty to relieve the poor, and if my feelings are against it, I must be charitable in spite of them. It is my duty to be honest, and I must suppress my feel-

ings if they would make me a rogue. So, in preaching : if I am qualified to instruct the ignorant, it is my duty to do it ; and if my feelings are opposed to it, I must silence them with the awful consideration, "Woe be unto me if I preach not the gospel."

But you will say, "It is not all impulses which are to be followed, but those only which are excited by the Holy Ghost." Very well : but how shall I know that a particular motion is excited by the Holy Ghost ? If you say, "When the Holy Ghost prompts a man to preach, he accompanies the motion with an inward and distinct consciousness of his agency." I answer, If this be true, by making the Spirit's influence the rule of action, you render the word of God of no use, for one infallible director is as good as a thousand ; and we have again arrived at fanaticism and infidelity. If revelation is to be our guide, the sense of duty must give the impulse to action.

A man who understands religion, and perceives it to be his duty to teach it, may have his conviction of duty powerfully impressed upon his mind by the Holy Spirit ; just the same as by a divine influence he is persuaded to practise the duties of honesty and charity. The scriptures teach that "it is God who worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure ;" and in perfect unison with these sentiments is the declaration of the church of England, that all holy desires, and all just works proceed from our heavenly Father. But it is not the impression of the Spirit of God which confers the right, or creates the duty to preach any more than it confers the right or creates the duty to be just and merciful ; the authority and obligation must, in the nature of things, be antecedent to the impression.

What has led to so much nonsense about a call to the ministry, has been the generally received opinion, that priests are a distinct order of men, specially designated by Heaven to their holy employment, and solemnly set apart to it by a junta of the sacred profession, with a number of pompous rites and ceremo-

nies.* Now suppose a layman to be ever so well qualified to give religious instruction,—to be even wiser and better than the parish priest,—it is taken for granted that he cannot have the inward call; if he pretends to have received it, he is called an enthusiast; and if he presumes to hold forth, he is denounced as unauthorised, and unaccredited;—a usurper of the sacred office, whose ministrations must be accompanied with a curse rather than a blessing. Were the right and duty to teach christianity founded upon a man's ability for the work, which is the only proper basis, a corporation of priests could no longer claim an exclusive privilege to make ministers and to preach the gospel.

According to church logic, there is not an individual receives the inward call or motion besides those who actually receive ordination; nor a single ordained person who has not received the inward call. For if more were designated to the office by the Almighty, than are actually put into it by the bishops, these supernumeraries would have a right to preach independent of episcopal authority, (and this would spoil all,) unless their lordships conceive they possess a power to annul the appointments of the supreme Being; and this would be to suppose their authority superior to his. And were they to ordain one whom God has not called to the work, the people could derive no benefit from his ministrations, and would, of course, be justified in looking out for help from some other quarter. This, then, is the conclusion we must come to, that God has subjected himself in this business to the will of bishops; if they appoint any or none to the ministry, and if those they may appoint be good, bad, or indifferent, he is perfectly satisfied,—at least, no doubt they believe so; but who else can?

It is a favourite sentiment with many, that God does not give an inward call without an outward call, and

* We cannot justify our author in speaking so contemptuously of an opinion which has been pleaded for by so many pious, wise, and learned men, even if its truth were questionable.—EDIT.

that this outward call is from the church. But what church? The English church says one, the Calvinist church says another, the Baptist church says a third, etc. That every church has a right to choose its own ministers, I am not going to dispute; this right is founded in nature. But I ask, Is it not a duty in christians to propagate their religion? I have half a score ignorant and wicked neighbours. I am a christian, and love my neighbours as myself. I could instruct and warn them, and perhaps persuade them to embrace christianity. You will go to hell yourself, says one, if you preach to them that they are in any danger of going there. Why? Why! because you are not episcopally ordained. Will the bishop ordain me? No, not unless you know the languages. Stuff! I am not going to preach to these profligates in either Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, but in plain English. Thus, for want of an outward call, I must not dare to talk to my neighbours about their souls! Where is common sense?

What church gave the apostles a call? or sent them out to preach? And where do the scriptures say a single word about an outward call? We read in the New Testament, of a man who propagated christianity by working miracles in the name of Christ, and who had received no human appointment to the sacred office. The apostles attempted to silence this man: "We forbid him." And why, gentlemen, did you forbid him? Because he was ignorant, or wicked? No; but for this wonderful reason, "Because he followed not us." That is, in modern cant, "Because he would not submit to the constituted authorities. Because he was unauthorised, and unaccredited, — an intruder into the sacred office; a self-appointed and dangerous schismatic, who seceded from the most pure and apostolic church in Christendom." The disciples reported their case to their Master, expecting, no doubt, his warmest approbation of their conduct. Now, what did our Saviour do on this occasion? Did he deliver a long harangue on the necessity of unity, the unlawfulness of assuming

the ministerial office, the sin and danger of schism? Did he proceed to curse this first dissenting minister with bell, book and candle, in the name of the holy Trinity? So far from it, the amiable Jesus approved and justified his conduct, and severely censured their rashness and folly. He said, "Forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me; for he that is not against us, is on our part." (Mark ix. 38—40.)

Frumentius, a layman, introduced christianity into Abyssinia, and baptised the king and his principal courtiers. It is true this apostle was afterwards ordained a bishop, by the orthodox Athanasius; but he ought rather to have been burned as a damnable heretic, if intrusion into the sacred office be a sin of the first magnitude. The gospel was introduced into Georgia, a province of Asia, by a female slave. By the number of her miracles, and the sanctity of her manners, she converted the king and queen, who destroyed their idols and embraced the faith. His majesty, before his baptism, preached to, and converted his subjects, and thus became the apostle of his country before he himself was initiated.* Now, would it have been better for these nations to have remained in idolatry, than thus to be converted by self-appointed teachers? "I have no scruple," affirms a mitred bigot, "in saying that it were better it should, than that a person should be employed, of whose fitness we have no means of judging." Supposing there even were an irregularity in these cases, (though I cannot perceive it,) it were surely better that people should go irregularly to heaven, than decently and in order to hell.

Let us then return again to the point. It is the duty of every man to do all the good he can. If I meet with a man more ignorant than myself, it is my duty, if he be willing to hear me, to give him instruction. Suppose I have several neighbours who are willing to hear me; instead of visiting them from

* Mosheim, cent. 4, part i., chap. i., sect. xx. Burnet's Exposit., art. 23.

house to house, which I have not time to do, I desire them to meet me at an appointed time and place, and instead of the trouble of many lectures in private, I deliver one discourse to them all in public; and, O wonderful! without either a bishop's hands, or a priest's gown, I am turned parson! and while presumptuous mortals are exclaiming, disorder! the harmony of heaven is improved by the joy of angels over these converted sinners!

Upon the principle here laid down, a man may have a call to preach to one congregation, and not to another; because the one may be more ignorant, and the other wiser than the teacher. The Methodists act upon this plan. By a judicious distribution of talent, the abilities of all are brought into useful operation. They send preachers of inferior parts into the villages, to teach the ignorant the first rudiments of christianity, for which service they are sufficiently qualified. The congregations of a superior class are served by men distinguished for their learning and pulpit eloquence.

Objection. "This scheme, of permitting every man to preach who fancies himself qualified by his piety and knowledge, would breed endless confusion and schism." It would occasion no confusion. No man can preach to a society of christians without the consent of that society. A person believes himself qualified to preach and makes a tender of his services to a church. The church does not approve of him, and he goes out into the world. If any choose to hear him, they may do so without confusion, and if he cannot get a congregation, he must either preach to empty pews, or sit down and be quiet; but in either case he breeds no disturbance.

The case of schism must be considered more at large. Schism is sometimes a sin, and sometimes a virtue. In John vii. 43, the word is used to denote a difference of opinion among the multitude concerning Christ: "There was a schism among the people because of him." By comparing the preceding verses, it ap-

pears that our Lord gained over many of the people by his doctrine. This change in their sentiments produced a schism in his favour. It should seem from the next verse, that these schismatics protected him from the rage of his enemies: "For some of them would have taken him, but no man laid hands on him." By opening the eyes of the blind, our Lord produced another schism. "Therefore," said some of the Pharisees, "this man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath-day. Others said, how can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a schism among them." (John ix. 16.) Now, who were the sinners in this case? Those who held fast their old prejudices against Jesus? or the schismatics, who looked upon him as a good man? In both the above instances, the schismatics deserve praise; in the former, they protected our Saviour from personal injury; and, in the latter, they defended the innocence of his conduct.

The only places in the New Testament where church schisms are mentioned, are the following: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." "When ye come together in the church, I hear that there be schisms among you, and I partly believe it." "That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another." (1 Cor. i. 10; xi. 18; xii. 25.) The schism, in the first text, refers to their foolish partialities and antipathies respecting their preachers. One said, I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos, etc. The apostle blames them all equally; and this is not a solitary instance of a whole church being divided into factions in itself, and all the factions being sinful schismatics. In the second passage, the schism took place when they were come together in the church. It is pretty evident, from the following verses, that the Corinthians took a social supper of their own in the

church, previous to the celebration of the eucharist. On these occasions, according to the custom of the Greeks, every one brought his own provisions to the meeting. The rich brethren made a pompous display of their luxuries, while the poor, who were ashamed of their ordinary and scanty fare, divided from them, and retired into a corner to eat their morsel alone. Thus, as the apostle complains, one was drunken, and another hungry. The rich are blamed by the apostle for causing the schism, and the poor who made it are pitied. In the last text the schism guarded against, was a difference of opinion on the value and importance of spiritual gifts. The apostle compares these gifts to the members of the body, and shows, that as each member is necessary to the man, so each gift is necessary to the church; and that, since the feeblest and least honourable parts of the body contribute to the welfare of the whole, and on that account are prized and carefully preserved from injury, so the weakest gifts contribute to the perfection of the church, and are therefore entitled to the attention and esteem of all believers.

The above remarks will serve to correct two mistakes : First. It is generally supposed, that schism is a separation from a church; whereas, in the above instances, it is represented as a division in a church. The christians at Corinth, are not charged with forming several churches or societies in opposition to each other, nor are they cautioned against any such thing; they are merely reprov'd for, and warned against creating dissension in the church. Secondly. Schism is generally spoken of under the notion of a damnable sin; whereas, in the texts under consideration, it does not appear to be marked by any character of peculiar aggravation. Attend for a moment longer to the three texts: in the first, the sin lay in over-rating the abilities of some preachers, and thinking meanly of the gifts of others. Is this a damnable sin? In the second, the poor were the schismatics, who were not blamed at all. In the third, the evil guarded against is a depreciation of the

value of inferior spiritual gifts; but the Corinthians are not warned against this error by threatening them with the terrors of eternal damnation.

Making a schism, however, is seldom a virtue, because when the schismatics happen to be right in their opinions, they often defend them by an unjustifiable warmth of temper; and no opinion is of sufficient importance to excuse indulgence in the bad passions. The worst of schismatics are they who magnify petty differences into matters of the utmost consequence, and who make them terms of communion, and necessary to salvation.

Objection. "Allowing every person to preach who conceives himself qualified, has been the cause of our being divided into innumerable sects and parties, and this surely is a great evil, which is forbidden in sacred scripture." Where is it forbidden in scripture? Show me chapter and verse. If the church of Christ was to consist of one sect only, to the end of the world, which is that sect? It cannot be the church of England, for its constitution is only a few centuries old. It is said by its advocates to have been formed on the model of the primitive church, as it existed for the four first centuries. Admitting this to be true, for the sake of argument, it is not pretended that any church since the fourth century has had a similar constitution. Now, then, where was the church of Christ from the fourth century to the reformation? What church made our thirty-nine articles the standard of its faith, and used our liturgy as its only manual of devotion? Let the true church be found where it will, if you cannot find our articles and prayer-book in it, the church of England is a dissenter from it; and, therefore, according to the objection, is not a church of Christ. Is the church of Rome that sect? It is not pretended by the papists that the church of Rome is the same now, that it was when first constituted by an apostle; for they freely admit, that councils have added to it innumerable articles of faith, and rites and ceremonies of worship.

Both parties endeavour to justify the additions they

have made, by pretending, that "the church has a power to decree rights and ceremonies, and authority in matters of faith." As no one pretends that the church of Rome was not once a true church, by allowing her then to possess the power pleaded for, you cannot deny her to be a true church still. Admit this authority, and she will justify all her abominations. It must be evident at once, that such a power ought only to be lodged in infallible hands: for if you suppose those who possess it liable to err, they may soon, by virtue of it, turn the church of Christ into a synagogue of Satan. Upon this point the catholics are consistent. The church of England, by admitting this power, cannot possibly justify her separation from Rome; and by claiming this power herself, without asserting her infallibility, she is guilty of the grossest folly.

Let us come then to the point. All parties agree that the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church. The objection supposes the church of Christ to consist of one sect, the individuals composing which all agree in the same articles of faith, the same formularies of worship, and the same rules of discipline; and that this sect has existed since the days of the apostles. It has been shown, that the church of Rome cannot be that sect, unless you admit her plea to the divine attribute of infallibility; and the fallacy of this pretension has been so often exposed, that it is quite unnecessary to dwell upon it here. The church of England cannot be that sect, because it has existed only for a few centuries; and I will defy any man to prove that such a sect is in existence. The church of Christ does not consist of any one sect exclusively, but of the virtuous among all sects.

The apostles of Christ had no idea of uniformity in the constitution of Christian churches. They made no other creed than the scriptures. No person now is so ignorant as to believe, that what is called, The Apostles' Creed, was composed by them. They made no liturgy to be used in public worship, but left every

church to manage this important business as well as it could. What is said to prove that they composed forms of prayer by inspiration, for the use of the church, does not deserve serious consideration. If they made a prayer book, how happened it that it was not preserved as well as their other writings? They had no uniform plan of discipline. The apostles themselves, and Timothy and Titus, who were all itinerant preachers, executed discipline in the churches they founded and visited, during their stay. In their absence, this power was exercised by the presbyters; and where there were no presbyters, as at Corinth, the people did this business themselves. Presbyters were sometimes appointed by apostles or evangelists; and sometimes, with the consent of the people, they were self-appointed. These things have been proved at large in the Essay on Ordination. Here, then, was as great a difference between many apostolic churches, as there is in the present day between many sects and parties. This *diversity* of the primitive churches, is perfectly inconsistent with our modern ridiculous notions about uniformity.

It has been remarked already that our Lord excused the man who refused to join with the apostles, and to submit to their authority, which he surely would not have done, had it been unlawful to refuse subjection to an holy, apostolic church. Jesus said to these apostolic silencers, "Forbid him not;" let him go on casting out devils and making converts in his own way. When Paul was at the head of the church of Rome, there was another sect in the city, which was opposed to his. Instead, however, of abusing them as schismatics and heretics, he rejoiced in the success of their labours, though they thought to add affliction to his bonds. (Phil. i. 16—18.) Many will be of opinion that the apostle Paul was the only infallible head the church of Rome ever had, and he denounced no curses against the separatists; so that, if the popes are not even more infallible than he was, they ought to wish success to all denominations of christians. If

Paul sends no spiritual thunder against those who divide from an apostolic church, the anathemas of priests and bishops must be perfectly harmless.

After creed-making came into fashion, the articles were very few for some time ; but after the council of Nice, they gradually swelled into volumes. For several centuries, each bishop made a creed and liturgy for the use of his own church. This is proved at large by Bingham, who observes, "That every bishop had at first the power and privilege to compose and order the form of divine service for his own church, I have shewed in another place, where I had occasion to discourse of the independency of bishops, and their absolute power in their own church. Where among other things I observed, that as they had the privilege to word their own creeds, so they had the privilege to frame their own liturgy ; which privilege they retained for several ages ; as may be confirmed by this farther and most certain observation,—that when any new episcopal church was taken and erected out of another, the new-erected church was not obliged to follow the model and prescriptions of the old church, but might frame to herself a form of divine service agreeable to her own circumstances and condition."* Add to this, what no one, at all acquainted with ecclesiastical history, will dispute, that in the primitive times the people chose their own bishops ; and it will appear very evident, that both people and pastors, in those times, enjoyed much greater liberty than the members of most modern national establishments. It is true that when a minister preached any doctrine which was supposed to be novel and dangerous, he was called to account before a synod or a council, and if his heresy was judged by the majority to be damnable, he was excommunicated ; but if he agreed in substance with his brethren, nothing more was required.

From the above it is easy to see, that there was nearly, if not quite, as great a diversity of creeds and prayers used in the churches of the orthodox in primi-

* Bingham's Antiquities, book xiii., chap. v., section i.

tive times, as is to be found among the dissenters of the present day. Were the church of England really, as she is in pretence, constituted on the plan of the primitive churches;—were the people allowed to elect their own pastors; and were the pastors required to subscribe to no other articles than what are generally believed to comprise the essentials of christianity, and left at liberty in other respects to use their own creeds, prayers, rites, and ceremonies,—nearly all the dissenters in the kingdom would conform to the establishment.

Those who deem conformity to an established church a matter of importance, must surely be convinced that its terms of communion ought to be as moderate and easy as possible. There never was a church which carried uniformity so far, and which, therefore, made conformity so difficult to a conscientious mind, as the church of England. Its ministers are not permitted to use a single ceremony or prayer but what is prescribed by the liturgy; and they are required to signify their unfeigned assent and consent to everything contained in it. The only liberty allowed is in preaching; and it is astonishing that churchmen, in their zeal for uniformity, did not get an act of parliament to banish all sermons from the pulpit, except the homilies; for it must be as dangerous to permit a clergyman to use his own composition in the pulpit as in the reading desk. Even the pope permits different forms of prayer to be used in different places; and both Pius IV. and Gregory XIII., offered to queen Elizabeth to confirm the English liturgy.*

If dissent from the established church be a damnable sin, nothing should be a term of communion in it that is not necessary to salvation. For admitting everything in the church to be scriptural, all men are not capable of perceiving every religious truth; and if some men are kept out of the church in consequence of their scruples about matters of minor importance, churchmen are guilty of sending such men to hell for

* De Laune's Plea for the Noncon., pages 59, 60.

trifles. But the clergy carry matters still farther. They suppose they have authority to enjoin things which, in their own nature, are indifferent; and have, accordingly, imposed a great number of this description. All who are kept out of the church by a doubt whether our spiritual lords can alter the nature of things, by making that important which of itself is indifferent, are sent to the devil out of mere wantonness. "If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died."

But imposing indifferent things, it seems, was not sufficient; our subscription is required to contradictions. We must subscribe to general redemption in the communion service, and to predestination in the 17th article. We must affirm, with the office for confirmation, that the laying on of the bishops' hands is a sign of God's gracious goodness towards us, and, with the 25th article, that "confirmation has not any visible sign, or ceremony ordained of God;" that is, that the bishops' hands are invisible at the time of confirmation. But this difficulty, with many others, may be got over by shutting our eyes; for then the laying on of hands, and all absurdities, will be literally invisible. We must believe two creeds, one of which curses all who deny the Son to be of the same hypostasis with the Father, though the other declares that they shall without doubt perish everlastingly, who do not hold that there is one hypostasis of the Father and another of the Son. If we believe either of these creeds, we are cursed by the other; if we believe both of them, we are doubly cursed, that is, by each of them for believing the other; and, if we believe neither of them, we are trebly cursed, that is, by the two creeds, and the church which has imposed them. The church of England was never, perhaps, more justly characterised, than by the late Lord Chatham, when he said in the house of peers, "We, my lords, have a Calvinistic creed, a popish liturgy, and an Arminian clergy."

Strict as the church is with respect to the oaths and subscriptions she exacts from her ministers, it is a fact that there is as great a diversity of opinions among the clergy, as among the dissenters. In the church are to be found Calvinists and Arminians, Arians and Socinians, New-Jerusalemites, etc. The contentions between the rational and evangelical clergy, are much more fierce than any that are witnessed between the different denominations of dissenters. In proportion to the strictness of the terms of communion in an established church, will be the depravity of its ministers. The reason is plain. Many conscientious men will be kept out by their scruples; but the large emoluments attached to a state religion will operate as an irresistible temptation to the unprincipled. Hypocrites, whose godliness is gain, will, without hesitation, signify their unfeigned assent and consent to everything that may be exacted. Hence it is, that the most rigorously constituted establishments will always contain the largest proportion of hypocritical, profligate, and heretical clergy.

These observations will receive a practical illustration, by a reference to the period when our church was settled upon its present plan. According to the act of uniformity, all who did not subscribe their unfeigned assent and consent, to all and every particular contained in the prayer-book, by August 24th, 1662, were to be deprived of their ecclesiastical benefices. When the day arrived, very few copies were printed off, and thousands of the clergy subscribed more fully to a book they had never seen, than any conscientious man could do even to the Bible. About two thousand worthies, whose religion consisted in something else than loaves and fishes, nobly refused to set their hands to this monument of the wisdom and piety of Charles's bishops, and were in consequence turned out of their livings; the rest demonstrated by their conduct, that they were ready to subscribe to the Koran, or anything else, for a piece of bread.

From the great difference in men's education, op-

portunities, and intellect, it is unreasonable to expect that all men will see alike in all the minor points of religion ; and therefore, no friend to christian charity and peace, will make a number of unmeaning and unimportant articles and ceremonies, terms of communion. There is as much difference in the size of men's souls as bodies, and as much difference in their taste about religious ceremonies as their dress. What would be thought of the legislature which should enact, that all the members of the political society should be of the same size, shape, complexion and features, and should all wear clothing of the same sort, colour, quality and make? Yet this would be as wise as the attempt to establish uniformity of religion by law. There never were two men who believed exactly alike on all religious subjects. Suppose they subscribe to the same doctrine, they will explain it differently. For instance, several men subscribe to the doctrine of atonement: one believes that Christ actually suffered all that the human race had merited of the wrath of God ; another limits his sufferings to a select number ; a third supposes there is virtue enough in his death to atone for devils, though devils have no interest in it ; a fourth believes that devils may be saved through his death ; and a fifth that they actually will. Some suppose that God made some abatement to Christ from the quantum of suffering which was due to our sins, on account of the dignity of his person ; while others hold that no abatement was made, but being sustained by the Godhead, he survived that stroke of divine wrath, which was sufficient to crush the human race for ever. One believes that the pardon of sin, promised through the atonement, is conditional ; another, that it is unconditional. Some hold, that the pardon is only of sins that are past ; others extend it to sins to come ; some say we are forgiven at the time of believing ; others that we were forgiven from all eternity, etc.

Uniformity is unnatural. There never were two men, whose persons, tempers, or dispositions were exactly alike. Animals, vegetables, and, in short, all

the productions of nature, differ one from another ; so that it is doubtful whether, since the creation, the world has produced two blades of grass exactly similar to each other. If uniformity were attained, it would not exist a moment, because every substance in nature is continually undergoing some change. Our bodies are not two moments the same ; some matter is continually going off by insensible perspiration. The same observation applies to all animals. The whole face of nature is perpetually changing. These two characteristics of all natural productions, an infinite variety and perpetual change, are destructive of all uniformity. The deceptive appearances of uniformity are disgusting. The mind becomes weary with being employed for a length of time upon any one subject ; hence the necessity of relaxation, and the pleasure derived from the contemplation of new objects. It is owing to this disposition of mind, that we admire the grandeur and glory of God as displayed in the infinite diversity and continual revolutions of his works. And it is owing to the same disposition of mind, that we are fatigued with sameness, and gratified with variety in religion. Nothing has contributed more to that general indifference to the national religion, which is so feelingly deplored by many of its adherents, than a want of variety : it is over and over and over again, the same minister, the same tone of voice, the same creeds and prayers, and an annual return of the same sermons.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the diversity here pleaded for in religious matters is a diversity of error. Two creeds may differ in their phraseology, and yet agree in substance. How many of our religious disputes have turned out at last, after the contending parties have mutually explained themselves, to be merely disputes about words, and not things. And as two persons may hold the same truth, but, by wording it differently, may misunderstand each other ; so the same form of words may convey truth to one mind, and error to another. Though the clergy all subscribe to the same words, they do not all under-

stand them in the same sense. One says, the church of England is decidedly Calvinistic; another, that she is Arminian; and a third, that she is neither exclusively, but opens her arms to embrace both; only one of them, if any, can possibly be right. So liturgies may be differently worded, and yet each contain a service that, when used by devout minds, will be acceptable to God; and the extempore effusions of others may not be less agreeable; but an undevout mind will spoil the best form in the world. Most sects hold the essentials of christianity; no one creed contains every truth. The subordinate truths are divided among them; each probably contains a few which are not to be found in any of the others, and it is doubtful whether every truth be contained in the whole of them.

Admitting there are some errors in each of the sects, the cure is not to be found in acts of uniformity: for suppose the established religion to be as true as the Bible, it is equally liable to be misunderstood, so that there will always be as great a diversity of religious opinions in an establishment, as out of it.

The best way to banish error out of the religious world, is to let the pulpit be open to all. Upon this plan every religious opinion will be fully discussed; and as truth will shine out with a clearness and lustre which no abilities can give to error, she will finally illuminate the world.* Thus it is in politics. Before any measure is publicly canvassed, there is generally a great diversity of opinion upon it; but after it has been fully and freely discussed by the splendid abilities of our senators, the nation at large, except a few interested individuals, and their partisans, generally agree in one sentiment.

This plan, also, would afford the best security against the introduction of heresy. In places where the ministry is restricted to a distinct order of men, as

* This certainly is a very unguarded position, and cannot have the suffrage of the majority of those most competent to judge of its merits. — EDIT.

in catholic countries, there we witness the reign of ignorance and error. The reason is, the people are not permitted to think and judge for themselves ; they therefore quietly fall asleep in the arms of the clergy, and content themselves with believing as the church believes ; they believe everything, and know nothing. In this state of mind they are prepared to receive every absurdity which the clergy can invent for the benefit of their craft. It is in this way our Lord accounts for the introduction of heresy : "While men slept," says he, "the enemy sowed his tares."

The greater part of the noble army of martyrs, whose heroism is celebrated in our synagogues every sabbath day, were persecuted to death for preaching Christ in opposition to the authority of the church. Our holding up these worthies to general admiration, shows that we approve of an independent spirit in our ancestors ; and when we condemn this in the moderns, we are only acting over again the farce of the Jews, who, in the days of our Lord, built the sepulchres of the ancient prophets, and murdered their contemporaries.

The matters of principal moment are, to have a heavenly temper and disposition of mind, to act under the influence of pure principles and motives, and to regulate the conduct by the divine precepts. An agreement in these points is the only scripture rule of unity and uniformity. A parrot may be taught to repeat a creed, and a monkey to perform the ceremonies of worship ; and these animals might be made saints in comparison of many reputed orthodox christians. Men, in general, have always betrayed a propensity to lay more stress upon articles of faith and rites of devotion, than upon purity of heart and rectitude of conduct. If a man only adopt the popular creed, and perform the prescribed ceremonies, he may be a blasphemer, a drunkard, a sabbath breaker, an adulterer, etc., and there is little the matter ; the wholesome and godly discipline of the church is scarcely ever employed in the correction of these venial faults ; but should

the same man attend the conventicle and reform his life, he is immediately an arch heretic, a damnable schismatic, a wild enthusiast; his religion is hypocrisy, his morality preciseness, and his end destruction. "Come to church and obey the laws, and be a dissembler, be a hypocrite, or a devil if thou wilt." Such was the godly counsel of a pious and venerable reformer to a scrupulous puritan. See Neal, vol. i., chap. viii.

REVIEW,

BY A CHURCHMAN.

OF all the works which have come under our notice, we do not recollect one equal to this for ignorance and presumption. Mr. Isaac sets himself to work to prove, that there has not been an uninterrupted succession of bishops; that the ordination of ministers is a ceremony destitute of scripture authority, and of no importance; that the pretence of bishops to give the Holy Ghost in ordination is a mere farce; that learning is of no value to a clergyman; and that the only qualifications for the ministry, of any consequence, are the enthusiasm and fanaticism of Methodism.

To those of our readers who wish to see all the absurdities and heresies of the sectaries, embodied in a small publication, we can cordially recommend this volume. What judge Jeffries said, with perhaps too much warmth, of the works of Mr. Baxter, may be soberly affirmed of these pages, that "they are as full of poison as an egg is full of meat."

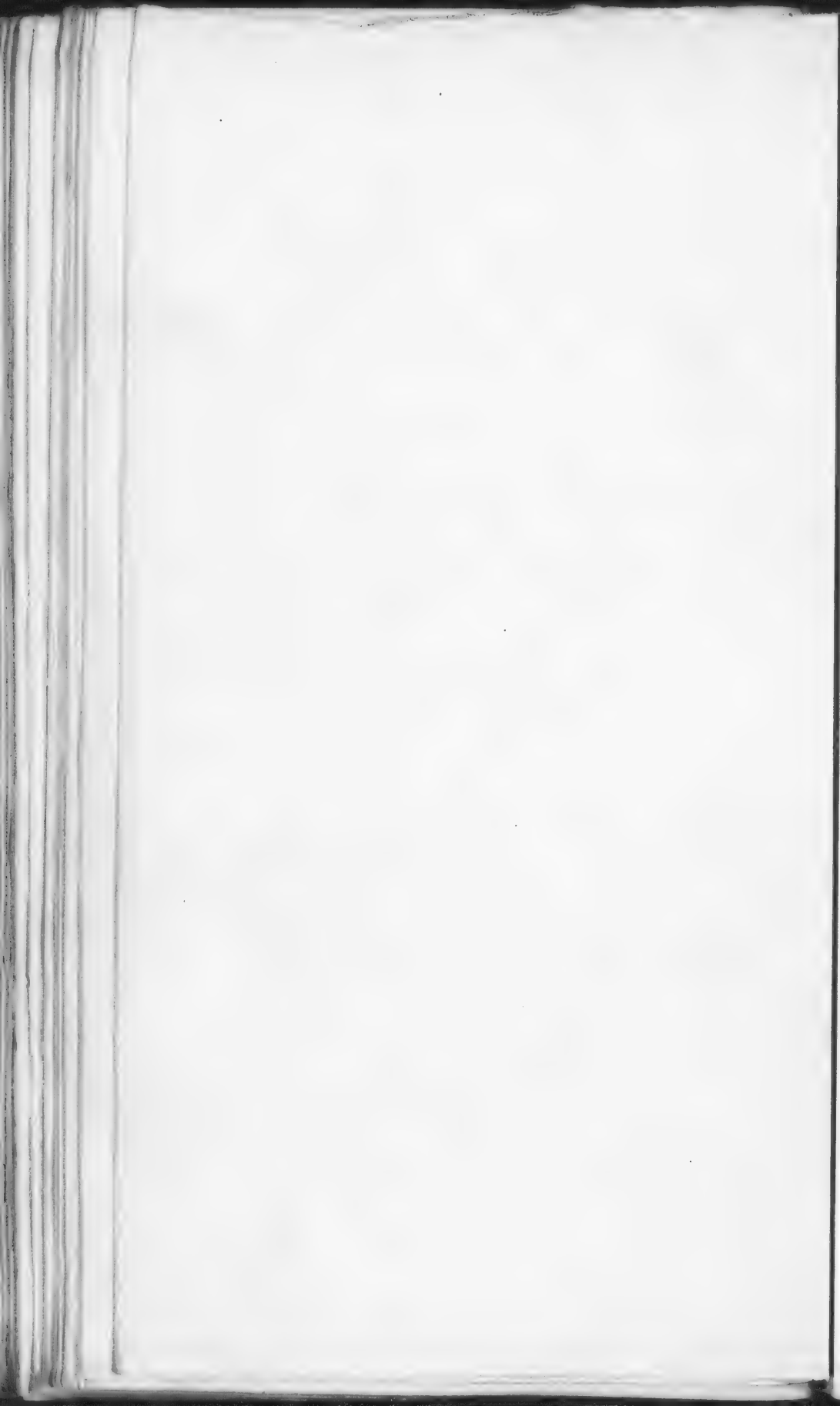
After the many masterly defences of our excellent establishment which have of late years issued from the press, it is perfectly unnecessary for us to enter the lists with this puny antagonist. We are very much

deceived if there be not generally diffused among our countrymen, too much intelligence to permit them to be seduced by this incoherent rhapsody; and we suspect, that when Mr. Isaac comes to settle with his bookseller, his book-making fever will abate; there is no danger of his insulting a second time the good sense of the public.

Hitherto the sectaries have spoken with some degree of modesty, when they have expressed the reasons of their dissent from the national church; but this writer is the most vain and coxcomical scribbler we have ever seen. The greatest champions of our celestial hierarchy, whose piety and abilities have been uniformly respected, and sometimes even panegyrised by its greatest enemies, are treated by this important personage, with the lordly air of a village pedagogue correcting his refractory school boys. The reading of this book has convinced us more than ever, of the necessity of repressing these fanatics by some legislative enactment; for, if this insolence is to be tolerated, we will venture to predict, without pretending to Methodistical inspiration, that the time is not far distant, "when the church of England shall be no more."

[N.B. The author thinks the above critique will very well suit the Monthly, Critical, Anti-jacobin, Edinburgh, Quarterly, and British Reviews. He begs leave to assure the editors, that they are at perfect liberty to insert it in their respective publications, on the condition of paying him half a guinea each, which he presumes to think, is a very moderate price for an article so orthodox, and so elegantly written.]

ON
THE RULE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH.



ON

THE RULE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH.

THE Bible of the papists includes in it the Apocrypha, in addition to the books which the protestants receive as canonical. Besides these apocryphal writings, the "unwritten traditions belonging both to faith and manners," are raised to an equal authority with the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as proceeding from the mouth of Christ, or dictated by the Holy Spirit; so that the popish rule of faith is almost infinitely more extensive and complicated than that of their opponents: "And if any person doth not receive them all as sacred and canonical,—let him be accursed." Such is the definition and imprecation of the wise and merciful council of Trent. (Session 4.)

In disputing with papists, therefore, the main point of controversy must be the test of truth. If they cannot be brought to the protestant standard, it is in vain that the Bible is appealed to; for they feel no difficulty in finding something in the voluminous writings of the fathers and the decrees of councils, to favour any nonsense or wickedness which fools or knaves may wish to impose upon their followers.

The question respecting the Apocrypha is soon and easily settled. These writings were never received into the sacred canon by the Jews, either before or since the Christian era. In the New Testament not one of the apocryphal books is mentioned, or so much as clearly alluded to, though it contains nearly three hundred citations from the Old Testament. The Greek and other eastern churches read them in their religious assemblies, as the church of England does, for edification; but they have not admitted them into their canon. Dr. Cosin, in his Scholastical History of the

canon of scripture, has shown that they were never admitted by any church as of equal authority with the Bible, until a few ignorant bishops at the council of Trent raised them to that dignity. "Was it ever heard of in the world before, that forty bishops of Italy, assisted peradventure by half a score others, should make up a general council for all christendom? Wherein, as there was not any one greatly remarkable for learning, that voted this canonical authority to those books, which by the consent of the oriental and occidental churches were ever held to be uncertain and apocryphal, so some of them were lawyers, perhaps learned in that profession, but of little understanding in religion; and though some others were divines, yet many of them were of less than ordinary sufficiency. But the greater number were courtiers, and bishops of such small places, or dignities only titular, that supposing every one to represent the clergy and people from whom it came, it could not be said that one of a thousand in christendom was represented in this pretended council." (Cosin on the Canon, pages 216, 217.) But it was then too late. His work has never been answered; and till the mass of evidence he has accumulated shall be neutralised by some rational process, which the abettors of transubstantiation, I suspect, will never be able to effect, the divinity of the apocrypha cannot be supported.

The subject of oral tradition will require a more lengthened discussion; but the conclusion, I trust, will be quite satisfactory in favour of the protestant cause.

Divine truth was conveyed orally till the time of Moses. Up to that period, revelation embraced but few topics, and those easy to be understood; and men lived so long, that tradition had to pass through but few hands in its transmission from the creation to the giving of the law. Methuselah was two hundred and forty-three years old when Adam died; and Shem was ninety-eight years old when Methuselah died, which happened at the deluge. Shem was contemporary with Abraham and Isaac. Two persons, therefore,

would convey the traditions from Adam to Isaac. From the death of Isaac to the birth of Moses was only one hundred and forty-five years; and two or three persons would be quite sufficient to convey divine truth from the patriarch to the Jewish lawgiver, by whom the traditions were put into writing. From this period, as human life was then reduced to nearly its present term, and as the revelations multiplied, it would have been impossible to transfer them in their original integrity, through such rapid successions of generations, by reason of the great diversity of divine communications.

From the time of Moses, all divine revelations, intended for posterity, have been delivered in writing. It is true the Jews had their traditions, which they esteemed as of the same authority with their sacred writings, and which were, they said, intended as expositions of them. They affirmed that God delivered these traditions to Moses, Moses to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, etc. The papists give much the same account of their traditions. They insist that Christ taught them to the apostles, and the apostles to their successors; and that by these, the New Testament is to be explained. But our Saviour denied the authority of the Jewish traditions, and charged the teachers of them with making void the law by pressing them; and we have precisely the same objection against the traditions of the papists.

Let us attend for a little to this point. The scribes and pharisees complained to our Saviour, "Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the ancients? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answering, said to them, why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" And after giving an example of this, he adds, "You have made void the commandment of God for your tradition. Hypocrites, well hath Isaias prophesied of you, saying: This people honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines and commandments of men." (Matt. xv. 2—9; see also Mark vii. 5—13.)

Here it is plain, that by the ancients is intended what were called the fathers of the Jewish church, by their traditions; and the commandments of men mean the traditions of the church. Now these traditions our Lord denounced on two accounts: First. Because they taught men to violate the commands of God: Second. Because those who observed them, worshipped God in vain.

The popish traditions produce the same effects. First. They encourage men to break the law of God by impressing them with a persuasion that priestly dispensations, indulgences, absolutions, extreme unction, and masses for the dead, will avail for their salvation, if they persevere in wickedness; though the Bible does not contain a word respecting such helps to heaven. Second. Their traditions about worship, render it worse than vain. The Jews neutralised their worship by their washings, and many other superstitious ceremonies. And the papists have their holy water for purification, and adore numerous lords and ladies, besides the great Supreme. For all these superstitions they have their traditions—the commandments of men, but not the written word of God. When the devil tempted our Lord to worship him, he did not claim supreme worship; for he did not pretend to be God, but admitted a superior when he confessed of the kingdoms and glory of the world, “To me they are delivered.” An inferior kind of homage therefore would have satisfied him. Our Saviour’s reply ought to startle the papists:” Jesus answering said to him, it is written, thou shalt adore the Lord thy God; and him only, shalt thou serve.” (Luke iv. 5—8.) The refusal of our Saviour was not grounded upon the wickedness of Satan, as unfitting him to receive adoration, but on the exclusive claims of Jehovah—“Him only shalt thou serve.” The question was not whether supreme adoration should be given to Satan, under pretence that he was the Most High; for in that case, the text quoted by our Saviour would not have been at all to the purpose. The devil might, and no

doubt would have replied to it, "I am the Lord thy God, therefore worship thou me." But he did not, we have seen, affect to be God; he only demanded worship in return, for temporal benefits; he made no promise of the kingdom of heaven. Nor did he stipulate that our Lord should adore him only, to the exclusion of Jehovah. And the refusal to give him any religious homage, because God is entitled to the whole of it, and demands it, holds as strongly against all adoration of images, saints and angels, as of devils. It is the adoration of forbidden objects, which makes the adoration of the Almighty vain.

The chief design of the Jewish traditions was to enrich the church; and the principal inducement to do so was, that this liberality would serve as a substitute for moral virtue. So in the case mentioned above, of our Saviour's charging the scribes and pharisees with making void the commandment of God, that they might keep their own traditions, the instance he gives shows what was aimed at by this supplement to the law. "Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by one, he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do." (Mark. vii. 10—13.) "Corban, which is a gift," is a sacred gift — something devoted to God; and what was devoted to God went into the holy treasury. This treasury was under the care of the chief men among the scribes and pharisees. Here our Saviour represents these sanctimonious hypocrites as instilling into the minds of youth the great value of these sacred gifts, and the awful sacrilege of applying what has been devoted to God, to any other purpose, however great the necessity. Thus in a domestic quarrel a youth, heated by passion, is represented as saying to his

parents, "Whatsoever of mine might be profitable to you, is Corban." In process of time the old people are reduced to poverty, and the young man repents of his rashness. In this emergency, the spiritual guides are consulted; and they urge the tradition, that vows of this kind cannot be dispensed with, and they "suffer him not to do anything for his father or mother." Thus the law to honour parents is made void; they may go a begging, or sit down and perish, rather than a fraction of that which, in a fit of anger, was devoted to holy mother church shall be alienated to their use. That it was the general character of their traditions, like the one under consideration, to make void the divine commandments, and to enrich the church, we are expressly assured in the words which immediately follow:— "And many other such like things you do." (Mark vii. 13.) And so St. Peter pretty plainly intimates not only that the corruption of manners, but also the silly opinion, that silver or gold might be accepted as the price of redemption, were owing to the traditions which had been handed down by the fathers. "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers. (1 Peter i. 18.)

The popish traditions have been contrived so as to bring a good deal of grist to the church mill. In popish countries, what immense estates have been acquired by the church! Besides which, nearly all sins have been pardoned, and all spiritual blessings granted for money. Go to a priest to confess and receive absolution, and you must pay for it. If the prescribed penance be disagreeable, it may be commuted for money. Indulgences will answer every purpose a hardened sinner can well desire. The following translation of the form used by Tetzl, is from Robertson's History of Charles V. "May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion. And I, by his authority, that of his blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and of the most holy pope, granted and committed to me in

these parts, to absolve thee, first from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred, and then from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be, even such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see; and as far as the keys of the holy church extend, I remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory on their account; and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which you possessed at the baptism; so that when you die, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened, and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The same historian has observed, that Tetzel and his associates recommended their holy ware in such terms as the following: "If any man," said they, "purchase letters" of indulgence, his soul may rest secure with respect to its salvation. The souls confined in purgatory, for whose redemption indulgences are purchased, as soon as the money tinkles in the chest, instantly escape from that place of torment, and ascend into heaven," etc. What more can any one want? This indulgence restores the poor profligate to innocence and purity; and the full efficacy of it remains with him up to the point of death. This instrument contains a full absolution from all the obligations of morality. Many papists, I believe, will admit that here matters were carried too far; but they should recollect, that if one pope could cheat his deluded votaries out of their money, and their souls too, others may do the same; and then, none of them can safely be trusted as infallible guides. If such indulgences cannot be justified, the reformation which they occasioned, is justified.

But the purgatorian societies, recently instituted in Ireland, the members of which are to pay one penny per week towards procuring masses for the repose of their own souls after death, and for the souls of their

deceased relatives and friends; (see a copy of the Rules of a purgatorian society, instituted July 1st, 1813, and held in St. James's chapel, Dublin, in *An Examination of the Arguments for the Pre-eminence of the Roman Catholic Episcopacy*, by the Rev. James Carlile, page 102, etc., where the whole scheme is developed;) almost rival in extravagance and absurdity, the mission of Tetzels.

The instance which our Saviour has given of the Jewish traditions being opposed to the law of God, is that of a son, absolved by the elders on the ground of their traditions, from all obligation which the law imposed upon a child to honour, obey, and support his parents. The popish traditions run exactly in the same strain. Thus pope Pascal II. absolved the son of the emperor, Henry IV., from the oath of fidelity and obedience, which he had taken to his father; stirred him up to rebellion, espoused his cause, and supported the interests of this unnatural rebel with the utmost zeal. All this was done in the hope that the son would become a more compliant tool of the church than his father was; but in this his infallible holiness happened to be mistaken. (See *Mosh. Eccles. Hist.*, cent. 12, part 2, chap. 2; and *Guthrie's Hist. of the world*, vol. viii., page 425.) The popish doctors teach, according to Limborch, that in case a father be a secret heretic, it is lawful for his son to accuse him to the judges of the inquisition; and they think that such a son ought to be commended, who conquers his natural love, and overcomes this most strong affection, from an ardent love of divine religion. And they teach, that there are two cases in which the son is obliged to betray his heretical father to the judges: the first, when the son is legally interrogated by the apostolic inquisitors; the second, when the father's heresy is dangerous to the commonwealth. (See the *Hist. of the Inquis.*, vol. ii., book 4, chap. 3.) Our Saviour, when speaking of the persecutors of his disciples, says, "And the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death." (*Matt. x. 21*; see also *Mark xiii.*

12.) According to our Lord, the persecutors are not of the church, but against it; according to the papists the persecutors are the most valiant and valuable sons the church possesses. In the New Testament, the church of Christ is often represented as suffering persecution, but never as inflicting it; and those who are "disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection," are ranked among the vilest characters, who "in the last days should come in dangerous times," and who, "having an appearance indeed of godliness, but denying the power thereof," the faithful are exhorted to "avoid." (2 Tim. iii. 1—5.)

It is an article of the Trent creed that the sacraments confer grace; and a man who has plenty of money may obtain these sacraments, and so get possession of as much grace as he pleases. The exchange of spiritual blessings for the filthy lucre of this world, was a species of commerce carried on very briskly at Rome, for many centuries; but it has lately been rather on the decline. The preamble to king Stephen's grant to the church is in these words: "Because through the providence of divine mercy we know it to be so ordered, and by the churches publishing it far and near, every body hath heard, that by the distribution of alms, persons may be absolved from the bonds of sin, and acquire the rewards of heavenly joys; I, Stephen, by the grace of God, king of England, being willing to have a part with them, who, by a happy kind of trading, exchange heavenly things for earthly; and smitten with the love of God, and for the salvation of my own soul, and the souls of my father and mother, and all my forefathers and ancestors, confirm tithes and other donations to the church." This was "a happy kind of trading" indeed! and those who would not engage in it, deserved a good roasting in purgatory for their obstinacy! In those days, when there were no impudent heretics to laugh at the cheat, and expose it, the churches published their holy wares far and near, so that every body knew where to go to market, and what to buy! But

these alms, it seems, all came into the hands of the clergy; the poor laity not being so expert in exchanging heavenly things for earthly!

By their traditions, the Romanists have entirely changed the character of the gospel. As preached by Christ and the apostles, all its blessings were placed more particularly within the reach of the indigent; it was specially adapted to their circumstances; and they are congratulated on enjoying its privileges to the uttermost. "The poor have the gospel preached to them." "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor." "Blessed are ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God." "Hearken my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him? But you have dishonoured the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you by might; and do not they draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme the good name that is invoked upon you?" (Matt. xi. 5; Luke iv. 18; vi. 20; James ii. 5—7.) On the other hand it is written, "Wo to you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Wo to you that are full! for ye shall hunger." "For they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (Luke vi. 24, 25; xviii. 24, 25; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.) From the slightest attention to these texts, it must be obvious to every one, that it is comparatively easy for the poor, and difficult for the rich, to be saved. But upon the popish plan, that pardons, dispensations, indulgences, masses, &c., may

be had for money in the greatest abundance, and that these secure to us the heavenly treasure, nothing in the world can be easier than the salvation of a rich man; and nothing so difficult (no not the passing of a camel through the eye of a needle) as the salvation of a poor man.

We have noticed the similarity in the pretended origin of Jewish and Romish traditions, and have shown that these supplements to the sacred writings, in both cases, have tended to the same points. 1. The corruption of divine worship. 2. The depravation of morals. 3. The pecuniary advantage of the holy order. Now as the two sets of doctrine correspond with each other as to their derivation and character, they must have the same author. But our Saviour has settled the question with regard to the Jewish traditions, and shown that they were from the devil; and this decision is sufficient to satisfy us that the traditions of Rome are from the same source. Is it to be credited that he should denounce the traditions of the synagogue as derived by a regular succession from the Jewish lawgiver, and that he should institute a new set, of pretty much the same character, and to be derived from himself in the same way? He tried traditions, pretending to a heavenly origin, by the holy writings, and he found them wanting. And encouraged by his example, we shall fearlessly pursue the same course.

Oral teaching was practised among the Jews, as well as among the christians; and the gospel ministry was instituted by our Saviour with a special view to the conversion of mankind. The oral teaching under the law was to be tested by the sacred writings: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah viii. 20.) Till the gospels were committed to writing, there was no other way of giving christian instruction, than by tradition; but during that period there was no danger of mistake, since the apostles were living, who had been the teachers of the

churches, and which they preserved by their inspiration from error. But these divinely inspired servants of Christ committed their traditions to writing, and in this state, left them to the churches as the only test of divine truth, by which all traditions are to be tried.

The church of Rome, we have seen, denounces those accursed who do not receive her unwritten traditions, as of the same authority with the scriptures. In opposition to this, I will show that the scriptures contain all that is necessary to salvation. The apostle's commendation of Timothy is strikingly to our purpose: "From thy infancy thou hast known the holy scriptures, which can instruct thee to salvation, by the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) The scriptures could not instruct us to salvation by the faith of Christ, if they did not contain the faith of Christ, at least, so far as is necessary to salvation.

It is a matter of no consequence in this controversy, whether "the holy scriptures," in this text, be restricted to the Old Testament, or, in addition to that, take in a part of the New. If the former, then the Old Testament contained a revelation of Christ sufficient to give illumination and salvation to a Jewish child. Under the former dispensation, the sacred writings are uniformly represented as containing all saving truth. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." (Psalm xix. 7.) By the law and the testimony must be meant the written word; because our Lord denounced the traditions as lies. To the scriptures, then, is attributed the power of illuminating the ignorant, and restoring the depraved; and nothing more could be necessary to salvation. But it is not clear that by the holy scriptures, the Old Testament, exclusively, is intended. Timothy, it is plain, at the time the first epistle was addressed to him, was but a young man; for the apostle says, "Let no man despise thy youth." (1 Tim. iv. 12.) That the second epistle was written within a year of the first, most chronologers are agreed,

and that Matthew's gospel was written twenty years, and upwards, prior to either of them. At the date of the gospel, therefore, it is pretty certain that Timothy had not passed the age of infancy; and from the christian faith and piety ascribed to his mother and grandmother, (1 Tim. i. 5,) we cannot doubt but they would furnish him with the christian scriptures, as well as with the Jewish.

According to this interpretation a Romanist perhaps, will say, then the whole of the New Testament is not necessary to salvation; but only the gospel of St. Matthew. The answer is, First. If only this gospel was published during the childhood of Timothy, then it contained all that was necessary to be believed and practised at that time. The obligation of scriptures cannot precede their publication. But that disposition of mind which engages a person to embrace one portion of the scriptures, will prepare him to receive the remainder when presented to him for acceptance. Second. Though a protestant maintains that the sacred writings contain all that is necessary to salvation, he does not suppose that they contain nothing more, or that the same truths are not to be found in different parts of the Bible. "But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." (Isaiah xxviii. 13.) The various and rich privileges of the gospel are compared to a feast; but that cannot be esteemed as a feast which is barely sufficient to preserve the guests from perishing. In our heavenly father's house, the hired servants "abound with bread;" and the return of the son is celebrated with a feast on the fatted calf, and with music and dancing. (Luke xv.) This banquet is not to be served up with the herbs of unwritten traditions, which are poisonous as well as bitter.

The following verse of this epistle gives a character to the holy writings, generally, which is fatal to all pretensions in favour of traditions. "All scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to

correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work." (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) The note on this verse in the popish Testament is as follows: "Every part of divine scripture is certainly profitable for all these ends. But, if we would have the whole rule of christian faith and practice, we must not be content with those scriptures, which Timothy knew from his infancy, that is, with the Old Testament alone: nor yet with the New Testament; without taking along with it the traditions of the apostles, and the interpretation of the church, to which the apostles delivered both the book, and the true meaning of it." A few notes on this singular note will be proper:—

The words, "All scripture inspired of God," must include the New Testament, since the Romanists are obliged to grant that it is, equally with the Old, divinely inspired. I have given a reason, which I think a very valid one, in proof that the scriptures which Timothy knew from his infancy were not those of the Old Testament alone. Several of the books which compose the New Testament were certainly written prior to this epistle; and, with the exception of the gospel and epistles of St. John, there is no satisfactory proof that any of them were written after it. And it would be preposterous in the extreme to suppose that the apostle, in characterising the sacred writings generally, should, without any notice, except those published by himself and his contemporaries. And if the sacred writings, which were afterwards published, were not in accordance with the great design of those which preceded them, it would no longer be true, that "all scripture inspired of God is profitable," for the purposes stated to Timothy. We must, therefore, if we would not oppose the text, include in the words, all scripture, not only the whole which existed at the date of the epistle, but also in subsequent times, the whole which might justly be added to the sacred canon.

When it is said, "Every part of divine scripture is

certainly profitable for all these ends," the writer is certainly under a mistake. For if every part were profitable for all these ends, then, as every chapter, every verse, every word, every letter, of the Bible is a part of it,—each of these must be profitable for all the ends enumerated; which is rather too absurd, I conceive, for even the faith of a papist. For the ends proposed by the apostle are not merely "to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice;" but also "that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work." Every minute part of scripture is not, and cannot be, so profitable as to perfect the christian, and furnish him for the practice of every virtue. But grant that every part of the Bible is sufficient to accomplish the ends proposed in the text, and what is the consequence? Why, that after having selected any part of the Bible, we could spare all the rest; and not that in addition to the whole Bible, we should need a countless multitude of traditions.

But while "every part of scripture" is made to answer the end of "all scripture," every part is not allowed to furnish "the whole rule of faith and practice." The whole Bible, it should seem, is inadequate for this purpose, without taking along with it "the traditions of the apostles," etc. And where did the infallible interpreters learn this? Common sense would suggest that if the Bible be so profitable as to perfect the character of a christian, it must supply him with the whole rule of christian faith; for to talk of a perfect christian having an essentially imperfect faith, is a perfect contradiction; and if the christian by the Bible "be furnished to every good work," it must contain "the whole rule of christian practice." The supplementary part of "the traditions of the apostles, and the interpretation of the church, to which the apostles delivered both the book and the true meaning of it," is added without any argument to support it, and in contradiction of the whole sense of the text.

When the apostle speaks of the scriptures as profitable to teach, etc., the papist concludes that other things,

traditions for instance, may conduce to the same design ; but he forgets the latter part of the text, which shows that the man of God may be so effectually taught, etc., by the scriptures as to become perfect : and when they have accomplished this, there is nothing left for tradition to do. I have paid the more attention to this striking passage, because it seems clearly to be decisive of the controversy.

The apostle John has borne the most ample testimony to the sufficiency and fulness of the sacred writings. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life : for the life was manifested : and we have seen, and do bear witness, and declare unto you the life eternal which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us : that which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you, that you may rejoice, and your joy may be full." (1 John i. 1—4.) The words, these things, must include the things just before enumerated, which were, what he had seen, heard, and handled of the word of life ; and must, therefore, comprehend all he taught and all he knew of christianity. And since he states that he wrote these things, he could not have any traditions in reserve, his whole stock of christian knowledge being communicated by the pen. The intentions with which he wrote lead us to the same conclusion. These were, that we might know Christ, the true eternal life, and have fellowship with the Father, and the Son, and the church ; and that we might rejoice with a fulness of joy. Now if the written word be sufficient to give us all the knowledge of Christ which the apostles possessed ; to bring us into union with God, the Redeemer, and the saints ; and to fill us with the joy of salvation ; — all which is plainly declared in this most striking passage ; — then nothing more is necessary to

our eternal happiness. The many folios of Romish traditions may, therefore, be very safely consigned to the moles and the bats; the curses they contain are more likely to light on their authors than their despisers.

Farther on in this epistle, (chapter v. 13,) the apostle says, "These things I write to you, that you may know that you have eternal life." But it would be utterly impossible to know from the holy writings that we have eternal life, if anything were necessary to salvation which they do not contain.

This same apostle in his gospel, (chap. xx. 31,) asserts the sufficiency of scripture to salvation, in the most unequivocal terms: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in his name." What was written was intended to beget faith; and such a faith as is connected with life. True religion contemplates nothing beyond this.

But we are told that scripture requires us to receive unwritten traditions; their rejection may therefore, in strict accordance with the Bible, endanger our salvation. The text upon which the chief stress is laid, in proof of this point, is 2 Thessalonians ii. 14: "Therefore brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle." The note upon this passage is delivered in a rather triumphant style: "See here that the unwritten traditions of the apostles are no less to be received than their epistles." Here observe, 1. One way of learning the apostolical traditions was, according to this verse, by perusing their epistles; from whence it is manifest that they committed their traditions to writing; and thus this passage is fatal to the notion so common among the Romanists, that the apostles delivered their traditions *vivâ voce* alone, and not by the scriptures. 2. The apostle mentions two ways by which the traditions might be learned, by hearing and by reading. And if one class of traditions were intended to be conveyed by writing, and another by

speech only, the conjunction *and*, would have been used in the following words; and the passage would have read thus: "Hold the traditions which you have learned, both by word, and by our epistle." Instead of this, we have the disjunctive particle *or*: "Whether by word or by our epistle." The Thessalonians had learned the traditions; but whether by hearing or reading is left undetermined; and this is a proof that the same traditions were conveyed by both modes of teaching; for the disjunctive particle here can have no meaning, if the same traditions might not have been learned through either mode. The necessary conclusion is, that the apostolical traditions are all embodied in the sacred writings; and that to talk now about "the unwritten traditions of the apostles," is to talk nonsense, since there are no such things.

If it be said that the words "our epistle" have reference to the first epistle sent to this church, and that the whole of the traditions cannot be learned from it; I answer,—The apostle does not say, *all* the traditions, but merely, the traditions they had learned whether they were many or few. A single epistle may contain as much of christianity, as is to be found in several oral discourses; and we know not how many of these the Thessalonians had heard. The point of importance contained in this passage is, that the christian traditions which the apostles taught by preaching, they taught also by writing; from which we infer, that they left no unwritten traditions for the church to learn.

In the next chapter we have a tradition in writing which the apostle had delivered verbally to the Thessalonians when he laboured among them: "And we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (2 Thess. iii. 6.) The connexion shows clearly that the tradition here referred to is contained in the 10th verse: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded

you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." If the papists would keep this tradition, they would send their consecrated lazy beggars a packing; and vows of poverty would soon be out of fashion.

Jesus Christ did not himself commit his religion to writing, but taught it, partly by conversation and preaching, when he was on earth; and partly by inspiration, after his ascension into heaven. Those who were favoured with the special influence of the Holy Spirit for the purpose, gave a full account of the life and doctrines of Christ in writing; and in this form his religion has been transmitted to posterity, as a perfect rule of faith and manners. Thus we find the gospels are full of what Jesus said, and taught, and did, both in public and in private; and the acts and epistles furnish similar information in relation to the apostles.

That the gospel contains a full account of the doctrines delivered orally by our Lord, during his personal ministry upon earth, is plainly affirmed by St. Luke: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a narration of the things that have been accomplished among us, according as they have delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having diligently attended to all things from the beginning, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest know the verity of those words in which thou hast been instructed." (Luke i. 1—4.) Here observe, St. Luke affirms that his gospel is made up from the narratives of those who from the commencement of christianity had been eye witnesses and ministers of the word; that he had by diligence acquired a perfect knowledge of all things relating to this new religion; and that his friend Theophilus might know from his book the verity of those words in which he had been instructed. Now if his gospel did not contain the whole christian religion, as far as it was then taught, Theophilus could not by reading it be confirmed in the truth of those things which had no place in it—in this case he might have

been previously instructed in truths the verity of which he could not know from the work of this evangelist. We must conclude, therefore, that the whole system of christian doctrine which the Lord had taught, and which St. Luke states he had acquired, is comprised in this gospel.

If this conclusion needed additional confirmation, we have it in Acts i. 1, 2 : "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, of all things, which Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day on which, giving commandments by the Holy Ghost to the apostles whom he had chosen, he was taken up." The former treatise here referred to, is allowed on all hands to be the gospel of St. Luke ; and it is here asserted that this gospel contains all things which Jesus did and taught, up to the time of his ascension. There is a peculiarity in this phrase, "Began to do and to teach." To begin to do a thing is a common Greek idiom, for doing or undertaking a thing. So in Matthew xii. 1, we read, "His disciples being hungry, began to pluck the ears, and to eat." Luke relating the same circumstance says, chap. vi. 1 : "His disciples plucked the ears," etc. In Mark vi. 2, it is said, "He began to teach in the synagogue." In Matthew xiii. 54, it is affirmed, "He taught them in the synagogues." The contexts show that both passages relate to the same time and place. See also Numbers xxv. 1 ; Judges xiii. 5 ; Luke iii. 8. On the authority of these texts it is evident that by all things which Jesus began to do and teach, is meant, all things which Jesus did and taught.

But it will, perhaps, be objected, that St. Luke's gospel does not, in fact, give an account of all the miracles and doctrines of Christ ; for St. John relates some of his mighty works, (as the curing the blind man, chap. ix., and the raising of Lazarus, chap. xi.) and some of his discourses, which St. Luke has omitted ; and the same apostle concludes his gospel with saying, "There are also many other things which Jesus did ; which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be

written." As to miracles, St. Luke gives a circumstantial relation of many of them, and a general statement of the rest. If he has not mentioned the case of the blind man, John ix., he has given the particulars of the cure of a blind man in chap. xviii. 35—43. And though he has not specially noted the case of Lazarus, he has recorded the resurrection of the son of the widow of Nain, chap. vii. 11—15, and of the daughter of Jairus, chap. viii. 41—56. With respect to the rest, he has related them in general terms: "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again. (Luke chap. vii. 22.) And this general reference, in addition to numerous particular instances, is all that can be intended by the words, "All that Jesus did." A special account of every individual miracle would have added nothing to the information the evangelist has given, as to the mighty acts of the Saviour, which is the only point of importance to us, as affording a demonstration of the divinity of his person and mission. The apostle John has represented the matter exactly in this light: "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in his name." (John xx. 30, 31. These "many other signs" have not been transmitted to us by oral tradition through the church of Rome. This the traditionists do not pretend; and I presume to think this surplusage of miracles is not contained in the volumes of legends they have published for the edification of the faithful, numerous though they be, since the apostle has declared, "If they should be written, every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books." (John xxi. 25.) After all, therefore, tradition cannot help us in this matter, the only details we have being found in the gospels; but this is the less to be regretted, because the instances therein related "are written that you may believe, and that believing you may have life." Their sufficiency

for these purposes shows that nothing further is wanted.

As to doctrines : — There can be no doubt that our Saviour taught the same doctrines at different times, to different people, and in different forms of language. It was not at all necessary, therefore, to give us the discourses he delivered during the term of his ministry, in order to convey to us all the truths he communicated to mankind ; this could be done much more briefly and satisfactorily by a selection from his numerous addresses. And till it can be shown that a single doctrine is contained in another evangelist, which cannot be found in this, we are warranted in affirming that his gospel contains all things which Jesus taught, until the day he was taken up.

Having shown that the gospel of this evangelist contains all the doctrines delivered by Christ from the commencement of his mission to the period of his ascension into heaven, it necessarily follows, that, after the gospels were written, there remained no “unwritten traditions belonging to faith and manners, which proceeded from the mouth of Christ ;” no not one : and as it is not pretended that the unwritten traditions, said to have been “dictated by the Holy Spirit,” stand upon any better foundation than the others, — the gospel of the popes, which goes under the name of unwritten traditions, can be esteemed as no better than cunningly devised fables.

But the passage under consideration is of the utmost importance in another respect. It settles the question as to what is the test of truth. The Romanists give this honour to their traditions, and insist that they contain an infallible exposition of the sacred writings. The protestants on the other hand contend that all traditions are to be examined by the Bible, and to be received or rejected as they correspond with, or differ from it. St. Luke informs his friend Theophilus why he presented him with his gospel : “That thou mayest know the verity of those words in which thou hast been instructed.” Here we are very plainly told that all

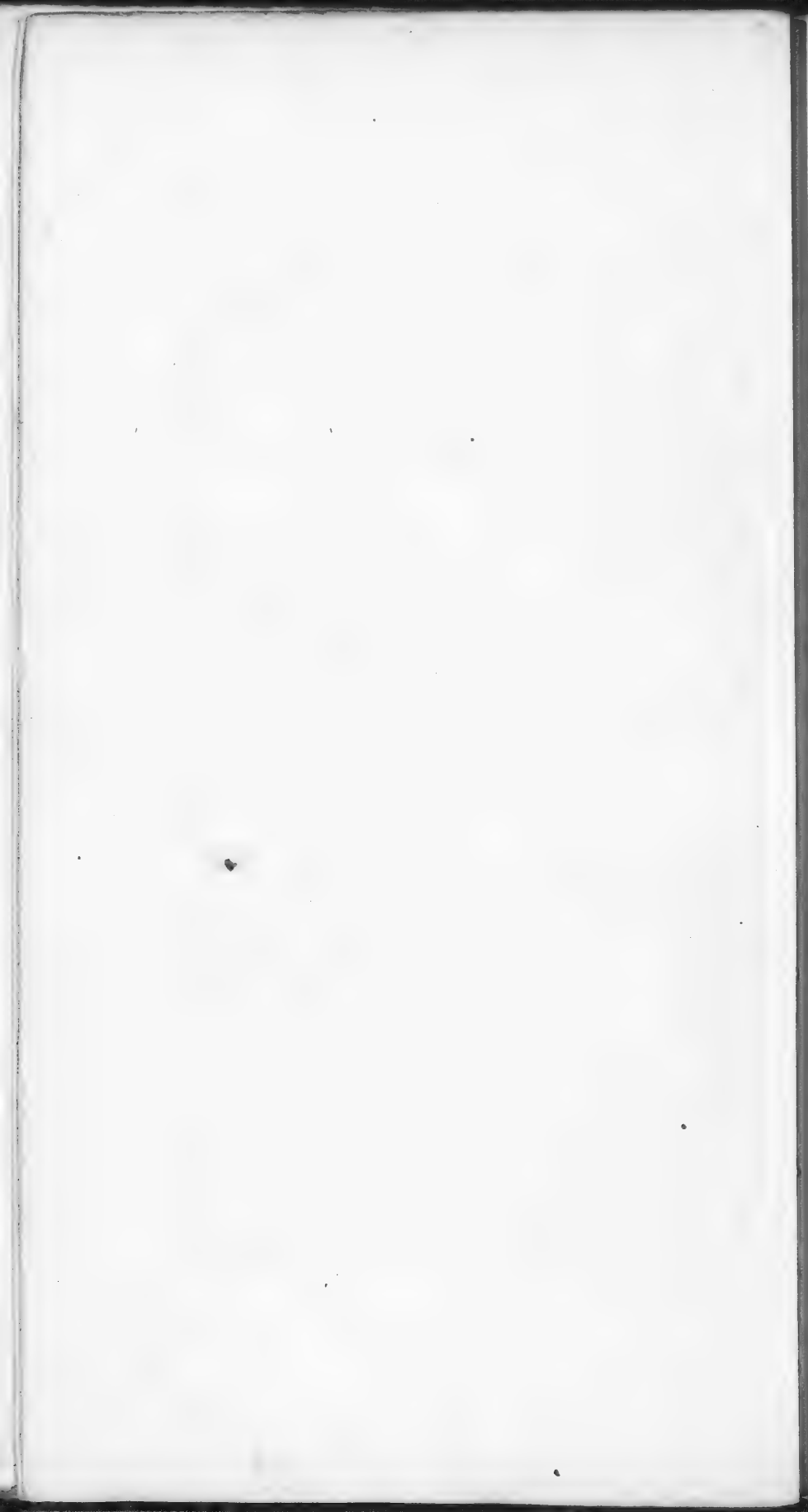
the verbal instructions we receive are to be tried by the written word, and by that alone their truth or falsehood is to be determined. The scriptures then, as the test of truth, show what is scripture and confirm it. All, therefore, who believe in scripture, are bound by its authority to try those instructions by it which they have received from any other source ; if it bear no decisive testimony in their favour, they must be rejected as being destitute of an essential character of heavenly wisdom. Thus the protestant rule of faith is confirmed by the decision of an inspired writer.

Protestants are agreed that on many accounts it was highly important, and even necessary, that the apostles should commit the whole of the christian system to writing. It is pleasing to observe, that the apostle Paul fully concurred in this opinion. "To write the same things to you to me indeed it is not wearisome, but to you it is necessary." (Phil. iii. 1.) The apostle had not written an epistle to the Philippians prior to this ; but he had preached the gospel among them. By the same things, therefore, he could not refer to the contents of a former letter, but to the great truths contained in his oral instructions. And so Whitby paraphrases the words : "To write the same things — which I have delivered to you by word of mouth." Instead of the same things as those delivered vocally, the papist restricts the words to some of the same things, and contends that the remainder of them, instead of being intrusted to the people by writing, were reserved for the use of the clergy, to be verbally dispensed at their pleasure. But, first. The same and some of the same, cannot mean exactly the same thing. Second. The apostle speaks of the necessity of putting in writing the doctrines he had preached. Now I should like to see a reason for the necessity of a part of his doctrines being thus committed, which does not extend to the rest. Was the necessity of the record grounded upon the apostle's fears, that if his doctrines were trusted to oral trans-

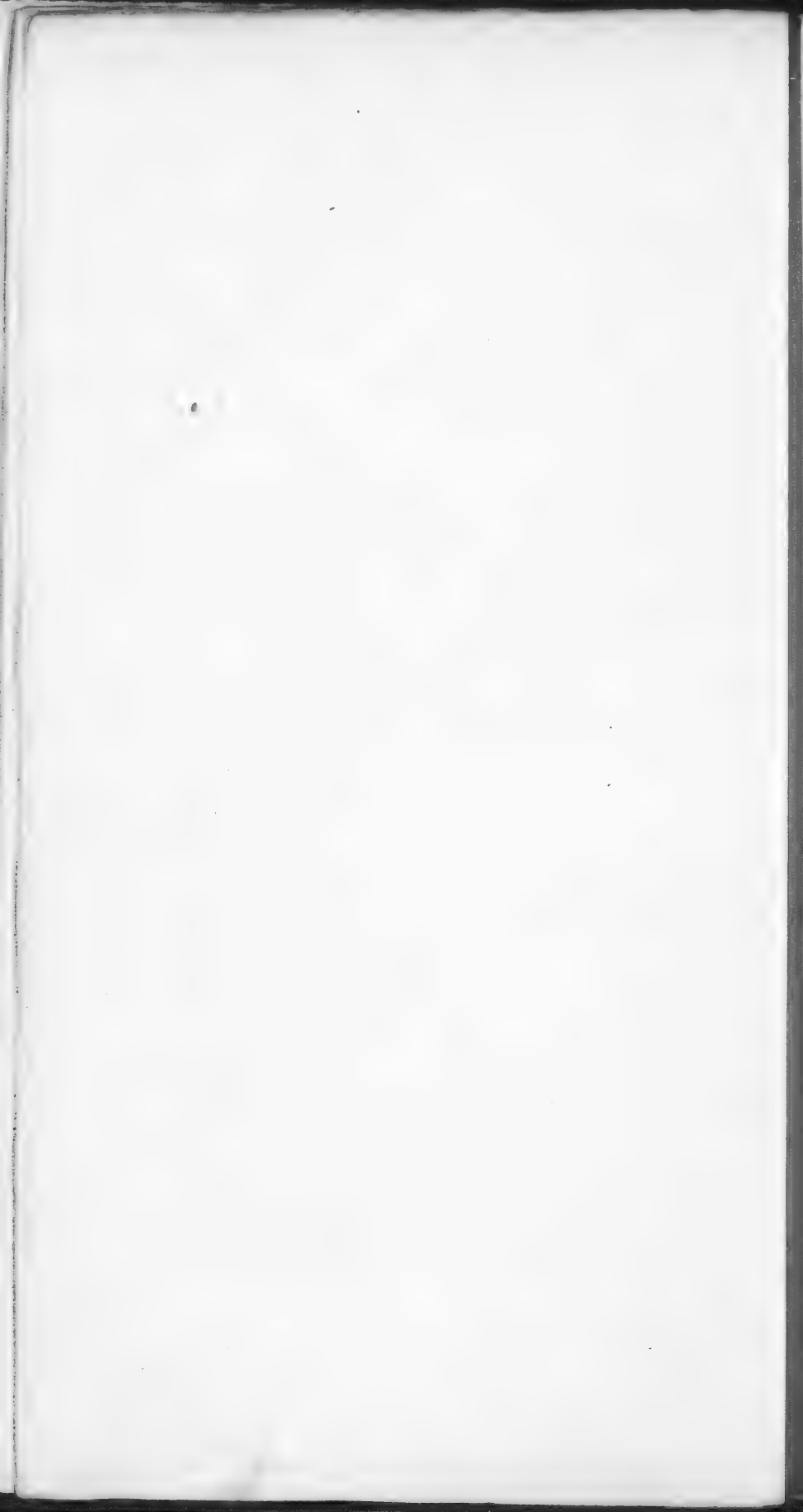
mission, the temptation to corrupt them arising from their unpalatableness, and from the difficulty of detecting the imposition, might prove too powerful for the honesty of his successors? There was reason enough for such fears, when it turned out that, though, through the multiplicity of copies, the scriptures could not be permanently corrupted, — they were kept as much as possible from the people, and were represented as more likely to produce heresy than orthodoxy, if read without the accompaniment of priestly expositions, and without the addition of priestly inventions. Third. Supposing the necessity, in the esteem of the apostle, arose out of the weakness of men's memories; the weight of this consideration would apply equally to the whole of divine revelations, as to any portion of them. He was not the only apostle who had jealousies in reference to this matter. Though the christians addressed by St. Peter in his epistles, knew the things about which he wrote, and were confirmed in the christian religion, yet he was afraid that his doctrines would scarcely survive his life, if not put into a more permanent form than oral tradition: "For which cause I will begin to put you always in remembrance of these things; though indeed you know them, and are confirmed in the present truth. But I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance. Being assured that the laying away of this my tabernacle is at hand, according as our Lord Jesus Christ also hath signified to me. And I will do my endeavour, that after my decease also, you may often have, whereby you may keep a memory of these things." (2 Peter i. 12 — 15.) The words, these things, mentioned in verse 12, must mean the things about which the apostle was writing. He was quite aware that he was penning no new truths, since he admitted they were acquainted with them, and established in them. But he wrote them for a remembrance. He had received a divine intimation that he had not long to live; and, therefore, he endeavoured, by embodying in his epistles those things in which he

had instructed them by word of mouth, to furnish them with a correct summary of christian verities, to which they might always have recourse for the refreshment of their memories in the things of God. He gives pretty much the same account of his writings, chap. iii. 1, 2: "Behold this second epistle I write to you, my dearly beloved, in which I stir up by way of admonition your sincere mind: that you may be mindful of those words which I told you before from the holy prophets, and of your apostles, of the precepts of the Lord and Saviour."

Thus it has been proved that the Bible contains not only all things necessary to salvation, but all things actually taught by Christ and his apostles. Oral traditions, therefore, are of no authority, and can only tend to deceive and destroy. St. Luke makes the scriptures the test of truth; St. Paul speaks of them as necessary to christians; and St. Peter shows on what account they are necessary. This last apostle is high authority with the papists, being their chief patron. He, we have seen, is against their traditions; he did not believe that his successors would remember his doctrine much beyond his decease, without a written *memento*; he had no conception they would, even with the help of the infallible old gentleman at Rome, remember perfectly, to the end of time, every word he had spoken. Those, therefore, who believe in Peter, may justly hesitate to believe in the pope and his priests, as to the excellency of their memories; for if the apostle durst not trust in them, why should we?



THE IDOLATRY OF THE CHURCH
OF ROME DEMONSTRATED.



THE IDOLATRY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME DEMONSTRATED.

IDOLATRY is the worship of anything as God, which is not God: "I am the Lord; that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." (Isaiah xlii. 8.) Serving other gods is called an abominable thing, which the Lord hateth. (Jer. xliv. 3, 4.)

The brevity I have prescribed to myself, will not allow me to enter into an examination of that worship, which the papists pay to the departed saints and sinners, to images and relics. I know the distinctions and quibbles by which they endeavour to evade the charge of idolatry, though many protestant writers have substantiated that charge by incontestible evidence; but I shall confine myself to the single article of the worship of the host.

The Romanists hold that in the eucharist is contained whole Christ, body, soul, and divinity; that the same worship is to be given to the consecrated host, which is due only to God; and that all are accursed, who hold it unlawful or idolatrous to pay it this religious homage. Upon this subject the Roman catholics are agreed. They freely grant that they are guilty of idolatry, if transubstantiation be not true.

Every reader knows that transubstantiation is built on a literal interpretation of the words, "This is my body." Admit this interpretation, you then have only a body to worship; for the text says not a word respecting either soul or divinity. Now it must be as gross idolatry to worship the mere body of Christ, as to worship a piece of bread; for "God is a Spirit, and they

that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth."

Nor will it help a papist to say, that the soul and divinity of Christ must be in his body, and that, consequently, these must be included, though they are not expressly mentioned in the text. For,—

First. The body of Christ is often spoken of in contradistinction to his soul and divinity. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spake of the temple of his body." (John ii. 19—21.) His soul and divinity could not be included in this challenge, for the Jews could not destroy them. (See also Matt. xxvi. 12; xxvii. 58; Mark xv. 43; Luke xxiii. 52; Mark xiv. 8—51; xv. 45; Luke xxiv. 3; John xx. 12.) The spiritual part of our Lord cannot be intended in any of these texts.

Second. The body in a state of death is referred to: "This is my body, which is broken for you." (1 Cor. xi. 24.) The papists say, they receive whole Christ; but that which is broken cannot be whole; for this implies a contradiction. When his body was broken, it was in a state of death; and that the sacrament represents his body as dead, is certain, because the cup, not the bread, contained his blood which is said to be shed: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you." In the language of scripture, when the blood is said to be shed, the life is supposed to be gone. "If he beget a son that is a shedder of blood;" (Ezek. xviii. 10;) that is, a murderer. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;" (Gen. ix. 6;) that is, a murderer shall be put to death. "The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it—Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed." (Ezek. xxii. 3, 4.) Is not the city here blamed for the many murders committed in it? In fact, there is not an instance in scripture where blood is said to be shed, and the life preserved.

Besides, the great design of the sacrament, according to the apostle, is, to represent the death of Christ: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup,

ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. ii. 26.) But if there were whole Christ, body, soul, and divinity, in the consecrated host, the papists would exhibit Christ alive in the sacrament, and not dead.

The scriptural account of the matter is therefore quite clear and decisive, that the body in a state of death, without either soul or divinity, is represented in the sacrament. Conceding the point, therefore, of transubstantiation, the host can contain no more than a broken dead body; and the worship of this is not the worship of God, unless a dead body be God, which no one is stupid enough to affirm. The worship of the host must therefore be gross idolatry.

Third. If the consecrated host, contained the soul and divinity, as well as the body of Christ, it must be alive. But it can manifest no signs of life. It can neither speak nor move. You can neither perceive breathing nor pulsation. You have no more evidence of its vitality than of that of a stone.

But transubstantiation is not true. It is built on a literal interpretation of the words of the institution. But this cannot be justified, unless the same principle of interpretation be applied to the cup, as well as to the bread. The words of the institution are, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi. 27, 28.) Now here the cup is as expressly declared to be his blood, as in the preceding verse the bread is affirmed to be his body. Observe, it is not the wine, but the cup, which is called his blood. As to figures and ellipses, the catholics will not allow us to have recourse to these in explaining the bread; and we shall therefore insist that they abstain from them in expressing the cup. They must, therefore, admit that the cup is literally changed into the blood of Christ, or retract what they say of the bread being changed into his body.

But this is not all. Christians are said to drink the cup: "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink

this cup. Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup." (1 Cor. ii. 26, 27.) Now here I will make a fair and honest proposal to the priests of the Romish church. If any of them will undertake, in my presence, literally to drink the chalice, I will immediately become a convert to their religion. I call this a fair proposal, because,—

First. I am literally explaining what is said of the cup, just as they do what is said of the bread; and surely both should be taken literally, or neither.

Second. It is no greater miracle to change the chalice into blood, than to change the bread into a human body; nor for blood to exist under the form and accidents of a chalice, than for a human body to exist under the form and accidents of bread; nor to drink human blood, in any form, than to swallow a whole human body. But till the experiment be really made, I cannot forbear thinking that the chalice would stick in the throat!

A close adherence to the literal sense of the terms used in the institution is fatal to transubstantiation. For the communicants are never once expressly said to eat the body, or to drink the blood of Christ. Matthew says, "Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." The papist infers, that they ate his body. The words in Mark are the same; and though they vary a little in Luke, yet is there no difference in the sense. Now, if this were the whole of the evidence, it might still be debated whether the word body should be taken figuratively or literally; and a papist might talk about the authority of the priesthood to interpret scripture and to impose their interpretations upon the laity. But this is not the whole evidence; for an inspired apostle, after giving the words of the institution, goes on to state, and he does this no less than three successive times, in three successive verses; and twice in the preceding chapter—what is actually eaten; and this he affirms to be bread. "For as often as ye eat this bread. Whoso-

ever shall eat this bread. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread." (1 Cor. xi. 26—28.) Here then the apostle and the pope are fairly at issue. The one reiterates that bread is eaten; the other as stiffly contends that it is not bread, but the real body of Christ. Which are we to believe? As here is a plain contradiction, one of the parties must be mistaken; and since both papists and protestants admit the inspiration of the apostle, it follows necessarily, that the church of Rome in this point has erred. And this settles the question as to transubstantiation; for if bread did not remain after consecration, bread could not be eaten. So our Lord calls the contents of the cup after consecration, "The fruit of the vine." (Matt. xxvi. 29.) Now this it could not be, if it were literally blood; for blood is not the fruit of the vine. Notice what they say of it being denominated from the accidents: (1 Cor. x.): they eat the same spiritual meat and drank the same spiritual drink—and that was Christ, and this the notes say they did figuratively. One part of scripture cannot contradict another; and a sacred writer surely cannot contradict himself in the same breath. There can, therefore, be no difficulty in fixing the meaning of the words, "This is my body." We have seen that they cannot be taken literally; they must, therefore, be interpreted figuratively. This represents my body. Dr. Clarke remarks, "In the Hebrew," etc. If the phraseology under consideration be a proof of transubstantiation, the miracle must be wrought in a thousand other instances. In John vi. 32, etc., Jesus Christ calls himself true bread. This is quite as good authority for changing his flesh and blood into a loaf, as the other is for changing a loaf into flesh and blood. In 1 Cor. x. 17, we read, "For we, being many, are one bread." Must not this too be taken literally? And then by some kind of legerdemain, all christians will be turned into a loaf of bread. Since the current language of scripture runs in this train, how happens it, that the doctrine of transmutation, instead of being applied to

thousands of subjects, should be limited to one? The reason is, because this is the only one which the priests could set up any exclusive claim for performing, and which, therefore, they could turn to their own aggrandisement. I appeal to common sense, whether the words, "We are bread," will not support a literal interpretation quite as well, as the words, "This my body?" and whether a transubstantiation may not as easily be effected in one case as in the other? But then in the former case there is no sacerdotal consecration of the people — nothing for the priest to do — the miracle would be performed without him. Besides, suppose the metamorphosis to be effected, what could the priest do with the loaf? Viewed as mere bread, he could not sell it for more than it cost him. Considered as containing all christians, he could not propose that it should be worshipped, or sold, or eaten. For if worshipped, it would be idolatry; and they are more disposed to worship themselves under other forms: if sold, his right to take all christians to market would be disputed, and few would be disposed to become purchasers: if eaten, I suppose most would be sick enough at the thought of gormandizing one another, and even themselves. But what power and profit have the priests acquired by a literal rendering of "This is my body!" What a stupendous miracle for a priest to change a bit of bread into a divinity! and what immense profits have been made of this pastry god!

But the popish transubstantiation is impossible. The council of Trent declares "that by the consecration of the bread and wine, there is effected a conversion of the whole substance of the bread, into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine," etc.* I do not dispute but God can change bread into stone, flesh, gold, or any other substance; nor that he can condense the whole matter of a human body into the size and dimensions of a wafer. But I deny that of two identical sub-

* See Ouseley's *Old Christianity*, p. 198.

stances, the one can be converted into the other, as the papists affirm is the case in their transubstantiation. For instance, my pen is one substance, and my paper another; now though I admit it to be possible to change my pen into paper, or my paper into a pen, yet I deny that it is possible to change my pen into *this* paper. Changing one substance into another, is a process that is going on in nature perpetually; but to convert one substance into another which existed prior to the change, is quite another thing, and is plainly a contradiction. This earth may be changed into a sun; but when done, it is not the sun which was the centre of this system prior to the miracle being wrought; and no power can make it such. The old sun may be annihilated, or changed into a planet, and the new sun put in its place, but since the new sun is supposed to be made of the matter of the earth, and the matter of the old sun is distinct from the matter of the earth; therefore the matter of the new sun is quite distinct from the matter of the old. Of two things previously existing, the one cannot be changed into the other. One may resemble the other; and the two may be blended into one; but the matter of one cannot, by any process, become the matter of the other. The popish doctrine is not that of incorporation; it does not consist in changing the bread into flesh and blood, conjuring up the body of Christ under the accidents of the bread, and uniting the two together; but in converting the whole substance of the bread into the body of Christ, which body, manufactured out of the bread, is denominated "Christ, whole and entire." Now this, I say, is an utter impossibility. Take any two substances as the subjects of operation: say your pencil and my pen. The substance of your pencil may, by power, be converted into a thousand different things—a pen amongst the rest; but it is not my pen; and although exactly like it, if you please, yet it is not, and cannot be the same: and to call it my pen, literally would be false. And since we are assured that "God cannot lie," he cannot be understood literally when

saying to what was once a piece of bread, that it is the body of Christ, because the body of Christ never was, nor do the papists pretend that it ever was, a piece of bread.

When Jesus said, "This is my body," what did he refer to by the demonstrative pronoun *this*? The text says he "took bread, blessed, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body," that is, this bread is my body. If the pronoun be referred to body, then the meaning will be, this body is my body, which is nonsense. Besides, the construction of the passage will not bear this interpretation. Take the words then literally, they say nothing of any change, conversion, or transubstantiation; they merely affirm that the bread is the body of Christ; the wafer is not either exclusively, but both equally. An adherence to the strict letter of the text, therefore, involves the papist in the absurdity and impiety of worshipping bread. And although they may contend, if they please, that that bread is the body of Christ, this will not exculpate them from the charge of idolatry; for the text says nothing of soul or divinity; and to worship bread, if it were really the body of Christ, would be as gross idolatry, as to worship his glove, or sandal.

But bread is not, and cannot be, while it retains the properties of bread, a real human body; because it contains not any of the vital and essential parts of a human body. That cannot be a human body which has neither head, nor heart, nor stomach, nor liver, nor nerves, nor veins, etc. And the most acute priest, after all his juggling tricks over the bread, cannot point out to us any one of these essential parts of a human body. An ox eats grass, and by the process of the animal economy, this grass is changed into flesh and blood; but still flesh and blood are not grass; nor do people cut grass when eating a piece of beef. The popish absurdity would derange all our notions of things, and reduce us to mere drivelling idiots. We might as well call a yard of riband a real bar of iron,

and a mushroom a real elephant, as call a bit of bread a real human body. Only understand the words in question as we must and do understand all similar modes of speech, in all other parts of the Bible, and all mystery and difficulty vanish in a moment. "In the same form of expression God speaks of the pascal lamb," etc.* The form of expression used by our Lord is common in all languages, our own not excepted. Thus I go into a popish chapel and see a group of beautiful figures. I inquire who they are, and am told, as my informant points to each, This, sir, is the virgin Mary, this is our blessed Saviour, and this is St. Peter." A papist would think I had lost my reason, if I understood by his answers that the personages named were really and corporally present. He means no more than that the figures represent the virgin Mary, etc. When a cunning priest is called a fox, and his silly dupes, geese, it is not supposed, however strong the resemblance may be in some points, that these good catholics, with their pastor, are really changed into the animals by which they are represented.

But how many bodies has Jesus Christ? When Jesus took the bread and said, "This is my body," did he hold one body in the hand of the other? Then he had two bodies. And yet the papists are obliged to believe that he had but one. Which was it then? The body that spoke? If so, the other was only a figurative body. Was it the pastry body? Then the other ceased to be the body of Christ. The true body in this case was eaten by the Apostles under the accidents of bread, and there were only the accidents of a human body left to be crucified. The Mahommedans and some ancient heretics maintained the latter opinion, which destroys the reality of his sacrifice, and the doctrine of atonement; for neither life nor blood could be offered by a mere phantom in the human shape. But if we believe the papists, there may

* Chandler, vol. 4, page 366.

be a thousand hosts existing at the same time in different places, and each of these containing the body of Christ, whole and entire ; and yet they assure us that Jesus Christ has but one body. A more impudent and abominable lie was never imposed upon human credulity. What they say on the properties of a glorified body, is all wide of the mark. Dilate or compress it as you will, and let it move with nearly the rapidity of thought, yet it is a body, and as such is an extended substance, and in its dimension and motion is related to space. The papists hold that "under either kind, Christ is received whole and entire." The whole body of Christ then is compressed within a wafer not exceeding the eighth of an inch in thickness, and an inch in diameter. Suppose a thousand of these wafers on as many altars, no two of which are less than a mile distant from each other. It is not possible, no not even to God himself, for each of these wafers to possess Christ's body whole and entire at the same time, because the assertion contains an absolute contradiction, and God cannot be the author of a contradiction. If Christ have but one body, and it be whole and entire on the altar at London, it cannot at the same time be on the altar at York. But here the expansive power of matter is resorted to : the wing of a fly it is said may be dilated sufficiently to cover the whole earth ; and therefore the body of Christ may be in London and York at the same time ; it may cover the earth, and therefore be on a thousand altars at once. Admitting this rarefaction and diffusion of the body of Christ, it necessarily follows that a thousandth part of his body cannot be on each altar, since his body must fill the intermediate space between them, or it cannot be "whole and entire" at all ; and even then it cannot possibly be whole and entire in every wafer, because it is extended many hundred miles ; for God can no more compress a thousand miles of space within the space of an inch, than he can make twice two to be no more than three.

It is a most perplexing subject to the papist, that

the accidents or properties of bread and wine remain, after the substance is supposed to be changed into flesh and blood. Thus the wafer, after the priest has spent all his art upon it, looks like bread, smells like bread, feels like bread, tastes like bread. It also wants all the properties of the new substance into which it is said to be changed. Though a papist stakes his salvation upon it, that the wafer is a human body, yet it presents none of the qualities of a human body, as limbs, muscles, bones, blood, etc. Here we have accidents without their proper substance, and a substance without its proper accidents. Here all analogy fails. It is pretended that "the divine power can as easily change one substance into another, as it made the world out of nothing;" and that it can be done in the same manner, as when by Moses the rivers were changed into blood, and water into wine by our Saviour Christ.* The first example is not to the point, as there was not a change of one substance into another, but a creation out of nothing; and great as the power was which was exerted on that occasion, it did not involve in it a contradiction, which I have demonstrated transubstantiation does. The world produced possessed the accidents proper to a world, and it is only by these that we know it to be a world; but the wafer does not possess the accidents of a human body. The world produced out of nothing was not, nor could be, made into a world which previously existed; but the bread is pretended to be changed into a body that was pre-existent. Moses changed water into blood, and Christ water into wine; but in both cases there was a change of accidents corresponding to the change of substance. To make the cases parallel, the rivers of Egypt should have presented the same appearance after being changed into blood as before. But if the rivers had still been water to their sight, smell and taste, not a fool in Egypt would have been credulous enough to believe that

* Abstract of the Doway Catechism, pages 70, 71.

Moses had wrought the miracle. And if the accidents of water had remained after our Saviour had produced the wine; that is, if it had looked and tasted like water, the ruler of the feast, who "knew not whence it was," would not have complimented the bridegroom as he did in the following words: "Every man at the beginning," etc. (John ii. 10.) Any body may perform these popish miracles; the difficulty is to find persons sufficiently blockish to believe them. I can convert a popish priest into a sausage: I have only to say, laying my hand upon his head, "This is my sausage," and the work is done. No one ought to stagger because the priest is not changed in appearance; I have all the popist arguments to demonstrate that the thing is a sausage, in the form of a priest. These are a species of miracles which you are required to believe not only without evidence, but in opposition to the evidence of all the senses that can take cognizance of them. Let one have impudence enough to affirm the miracle, and another be fool enough to believe it, nothing more is required.

But there cannot be the accidents of bread and wine without the substances of bread and wine. "The eucharist has the colour, taste and accidents of bread and wine; and yet faith, which supplies the defects of the senses, assures us it is neither the one, nor the other."* Then this assurance of faith is a lie; for there cannot be the colour, taste, and accidents of bread and wine, where there is, in truth, no bread and wine. Other substances may give a taste similar to that of bread and wine; but it is impossible to taste of bread and of wine, where there is neither the one nor the other. There is, it is admitted, a taste of bread, and therefore there is no deception of the senses here to be corrected by faith, or anything else. The eucharist must be bread, if those who taste of it, taste bread. As the accidents of the eucharist are those of bread and wine, they cannot be, and indeed are not, pretend-

* Poor Man's Catechism, p. 212.

ed to be, the accidents of the body and blood of Christ.

In the eucharist we have, in fact, a twofold miracle : accidents without their substance, and a substance without its accidents. But accidents without a substance, are accidents of nothing ; and nothing cannot have accidents. Omnipotence itself is unable to clothe nothing with accidents. " There cannot be roundness, and nothing round ; whiteness, and nothing white ; a taste, and nothing tasted ; liquid, and nothing liquid ;" (the Case stated, page 151 ;) for these are palpable contradictions, to which God cannot give the reality of truth. On the other hand it is equally impossible for a substance to subsist without accidents. There cannot be matter without extension, shape, solidity, etc. These popish miracles, therefore, must be classed among the lying wonders by which the dupes of anti-christ were to be deluded. This nonsense respecting accidents without substance, and substance without accidents, originated in the dark ages, and was supported by the jargon of the schools, to magnify the power of the priesthood, and pick the pockets of the credulous multitude. The light of science and religion has exploded these puerilities ; but even if they were admissible, what good end could they answer ? Our Lord informed those silly people, who thought that he spoke in John vi. of a literal eating of him, by way of undeceiving them, " It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing," etc. (Verse 63.) Though our Lord here explains what he meant by eating his flesh and drinking his blood, yet the papists adhere to the words literally, and that in spite of his own Spirit's interpretation ; and contend for a literal eating, though our Saviour says expressly that it would profit nothing. If these words were to be taken literally, every one who receives the host would be sure of heaven. " If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." " Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." " He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." " He that

eateth me, even he shall live by me." "He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." All this is true taken spiritually; but even a papist cannot contend for its truth in his carnal sense, since he admits that those who communicate in mortal sin, are not benefitted. Our Lord before had intimated plainly enough that by eating and drinking he meant coming to him, or believing in him. (Verse 35, at large.)

So on the other hand, if this chapter be interpreted literally of the eucharist, then this sacrament is as necessary to salvation as baptism. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." (Verse 53.) The ancient church interpreting this verse of the Lord's supper, inferred the absolute necessity of it to salvation, and in perfect consistency, gave it to infants. And if the flesh and blood mean the body of Christ literally, then there can be no life without the wafer, and every child that dies without tasting it, must, of necessity, perish everlastingly. The necessity of infant baptism is grounded upon John iii. 5: "Except a man," etc. As the necessity in John vi. 35, is expressed by the same term, *except*, it is of quite as much importance to give infants the flesh and blood as to give them water; and papists should either give up the text as applying to the eucharist, or imitate their forefathers in communicating to children. When a child is in danger, it is lawful for any one to baptize it, because, "Except a man be born," etc.; but no one is permitted to give it the wafer, though, "Except ye eat my flesh," etc.

The occasion of our Lord's using the highly figurative language in John vi. was this: he had fed five thousand miraculously with loaves and fishes. The people were delighted with this, and resolved to make him a king; they reminded him that Moses, the leader of their ancestors, had fed them miraculously in the desert, and dropped very intelligible hints that they expected he would support his followers in the same way. Our Saviour assured them that he would give them better bread than the manna by which their fa-

thers were supported. He then speaks of himself as the bread of life, and promises that they who feast on him shall not die, as those did who partook of the manna, but live for ever. This caused them to murmur, for they knew not what he meant by their eating his flesh and drinking his blood; they perceived that it was an evasion of their carnal hopes that he would maintain them in idleness by a miracle. Before, however, he had finished his discourse, he made all plain. He explained the terms eating and drinking to mean the same as coming to him, and believing on him; for we eat and drink to satisfy the cravings of hunger and thirst; and he remarked, "He that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst." This coming to Christ is not to be understood literally; for he declares in the same discourse, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (Verse 44.) But it required no divine influence, to enable a man to come to Christ literally; and it requires no divine influence, to enable a papist to approach the wafer Christ on the altar, nor to eat the wafer. And he explains the whole mystery afterwards by saying, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," etc. The papist prays that the body may quicken. "Deliver me," says he, "by this thy most precious body and blood from all my iniquities, and from all evils!"* Christ says, the flesh profiteth nothing. How impious then to pray that it may save us! and, especially, when the body of Christ is nothing but a bit of bread! "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The spirit and life are to be derived from the words, that is from the doctrine of Christ received into the heart, not from the flesh and blood of Christ going into the stomach.

But the consecrated wafer is not the real body of Christ; for it does not answer to the marks laid down by our Saviour himself, by which his body may be distinguished. When our Saviour appeared among his disciples after his crucifixion, "They were terrified

* Missal, page 78.

and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." In this they were mistaken; and how does our Saviour set them right? By merely saying, "This is my body," and causing them to believe it? It would have been contrary to his usual practice to leave them in suspense in a matter of such vital importance. He had presented himself among them miraculously, the doors being shut, according to John xx. 19. They saw the human form, but supposed from the manner of the appearance, that it was without the human substance. It has been the popular notion of spirits in all ages, that they can render themselves visible to mortals, by assuming the likeness of bodies without their matter. He corrected their mistake, by appealing to their senses. First. To their sight: "He showed them his hands and his feet. And he took a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb, and did eat before them." Second. To their hearing: "He said unto them," etc. Third. To their feeling: "Handle me," said he, "and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Now since our Saviour himself appealed to the senses of his disciples to ascertain the reality of his body, we have his authority and example for bringing every pretended Christ to this test. Jesus informed his followers that false christs should come, and that their abettors would be indefatigable in imposing them on the church; against this he has solemnly warned his people: "If any man shall say unto you, lo! here is Christ; or there; believe it not. If they shall say unto you, behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not." (Matt. xxiv. 23, 26.) Here is evident allusion to the popish priests and their wafer god. When they have placed him upon the altar, they exclaim, "Lo! here is Christ!" and all present must fall down and worship it. And when they have shut him up in the secret chamber of the pix, or carried him to the secret chamber of the sick, the cry is set up, "Lo! there is Christ." And all good catholics must adore their god. But says the true Christ, "Believe it not." These false christs

were to gain disciples by showing "great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect." (Verse 24.) So Fisher the Jesuit. Rejoinder to Dr. White's Reply, page 275, speaks of a woman who unworthily approached the chest where the host was kept, being frightened away by fire which flashed out of it. Brevint, in his *Saul and Samuel at Endor*, page 49, remarks, "I read in grave and famous Roman writers, that a consecrated host will fly and flutter in the air sometimes, till a mass priest holds up his pix to receive it; that shapes of flesh and young children have appeared on their altars, at the elevation of the said host; and that by many experiences, horses, and mules, and cows have been cured of their diseases, when some masses have been sung for them; and that at the consecration at mass by St. Dominic, Christ was seen hard by him, dropping out of his own wounds some of his blood on this dear saint; and that the blessed virgin beheld all this, and of her own accord played the mass priest, and administered the very body of her Son in one moiety of a consecrated wafer to this same saint, in token of special friendship. All this is averred and sworn as true by a formal oath, in the name of the blessed Trinity, and under pain of all kinds of God's curses; in case of a lie, or mistake."

It would be easy to fill a volume with accounts of these lying wonders: "Believe it not," says the true Christ. "We have known Christ after the flesh," says the apostle, "yet now, henceforth, know we him no more," that is, after the flesh. (2 Cor. v. 16.) How could this be true of Christ in the flesh, were he now seen on every popish altar? Those then who pay any regard to the authority of Christ and his apostle, will not believe that the body of Christ is to be seen here, or there, though signs and wonders equal to those wrought by the Egyptian magicians were attested, and sworn to by all the juggling priests in the world.

The false christs, in order to be detected, must be brought to the tests appointed by the true Christ.

The apostles were in doubt whether, or not, what they saw were the real body of Christ ; and we doubt whether what we see on the popish altar be the true body of Christ. We have more reasons for our doubts than they had for theirs. They saw the figure of the Saviour, and they heard his voice saying, the moment he appeared, "Peace be unto you." But the wafer does not present the human shape, nor possess the power of speech. The christ of the papists is a mis-shapen and dumb idol. The doubts of the apostles were resolved by an appeal to their senses by Christ himself. There is no other way of resolving our doubts ; and as this is Christ's way, we shall make bold to use it, though we know the priests of the false christs shrink from it, and would fain persuade us to take their word. He appealed to their sight, "He showed them his hands and his feet." Let them show us the hands and feet of Christ in the wafer ! They cannot ; then believe them not. "He" next "took of a piece of broiled fish and of a honey-comb, and did eat before them." Now let us see the wafer eat a hearty meal, and we will worship it ! He also appealed to their hearing, saying "unto them," etc. ; and when the host shall say anything to us, we promise to listen, and will try to believe. Nay, and he appealed to their feeling too : "Handle me," said he, "and see, for I have flesh and bones." Handle the host, squeeze it between your fingers—don't be afraid, you will not tear a muscle, nor rupture a blood vessel, nor fracture a bone ! you can feel nothing but bread !

The papists admit that we must be guided by our senses in judging of all other material things ; but in this they require us to believe in opposition to them. It is fatal, however, to their exception, that the Saviour, instead of being the author of it, has expressly appealed to our senses to settle the question of his bodily presence. Now suppose, when the apostles had recovered from their surprise, and had set themselves in good earnest to examine the figure before them, they had found nothing but a phantom which

could not eat, and which possessed neither flesh nor bones, would it still have been obligatory on them to believe it was the body of Christ, against the evidence of their senses? I think there is not a papist stupid enough to believe this. Now this is our case: after the most careful examination of the wafer, it possesses none of the special properties of a human body; and therefore we conclude that it is not one. The apostles are supposed to have come to an infallibly correct conclusion, though they had the testimony of but three of their senses. In examining the wafer four of our senses testify that it is bread; namely, the smell, taste, touch, and sight; and if it be baked hard, and be eaten as our Lord directed, we shall have the concurring testimony of the other sense; for it will sound to the ear like the crushing of a bread crust between the teeth. Examine what they say of the sense of hearing. In this case, if we are deceived, there is no possibility of correcting the deception; for we possess no means of judging of bodies but by our senses; and if all of them may give false notices in reference to any substance, we possess no organs or faculties by which this mistake can be corrected, the defect is incurable. But the appeal of Christ to the senses in judging of his body is decisive of the whole controversy; by this test the pastry body is proved to be a false christ, the pretence of transubstantiation a vile imposture, and the worship of the host gross idolatry.

It would be endless to recount all the miracles connected with the doctrine of transubstantiation. I will mention a few rather odd ones. After the substance of bread and wine is changed into flesh and blood in the eucharist, the properties of bread and wine are supposed to remain, and, which is somewhat singular, these properties are liable to change. For instance: by keeping, the contents of the cup will become sour, and the wafer will mould and become offensive. Now what produces this change in the accidents? Not the body and blood of Christ surely; for his flesh saw no corruption. (Acts ii. 31.) And blood does not turn

sour. Not bread and wine ; for we are assured there are none. Here are accidents attached to substances to which they do not naturally belong—the substances are supposed to be unchangeable, and yet the accidents it is admitted are liable to change. As there is nothing in nature to produce this change, it must be the effect of miracle. As the body and blood of Christ undergo no change, it would be natural to expect that the forms of bread and wine under which they exist would be equally unchangeable ; and if this were actually the case, we should have an argument for transubstantiation from the permanency of these forms ; for it might be said, if the bread and wine remained after consecration, they would be liable to corruption. But the miracle of changing the forms can only work unbelief ; for the change which takes place in the forms is precisely what would happen supposing the bread and wine to remain. As far therefore as this miracle operates it tends to stagger faith, contrary to the design of all Christ's miracles, which were intended to produce faith. The nature of this miraculous change too is very revolting. Take a consecrated host, which has been in a damp situation for some time, and smell of it—it stinks ! And is this the body of Christ ? Here they invent another miracle, to get rid of the loathsomeness of this : they pretend that when the host corrupts the body of Christ leaves it ! But how do they know that ? It is all hypothesis, to evade the charge of worshipping a god that cannot keep himself sweet ! We read in the book of Tobit, of his making a fume with the liver of a fish by which he stunk the devil out of his house ; and it seems the olfactories of the popish god are as delicate as those of satan.

But the truth will sometimes come out in spite of every artifice to conceal it. In the reasons assigned for withholding the cup from the laity, Fisher the Jesuit says,* “It is not probable that they did

* Rejoinder to White's Reply, page 340.

consecrate wine to endure five or six days long, for fear, in hot countries, the same should grow sour. Wherefore, for the most part, they did communicate under one kind." In a modern work entitled, "The Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine," pages 31, 32, the question is put, "What are the reasons why the church does not give the communion to all her children in both kinds?" And it is observed in reply, "Because considering how soon wine decays, the sacrament could not well be kept for the sick in both kinds." These champions of popery speak of the wine decaying, and growing sour. But if transubstantiation be true, there is no wine after consecration, after the sacrament is made; there is nothing in the cup but the blood of Christ; and surely this does not grow sour! No, they both knew this perfectly well, and in a thoughtless moment let out the secret, that after all their juggling tricks over the cup, its contents remain unaltered. Many pagan gods look sour! but here is a christian liquid god, which a few days after his creation, literally tastes sour!

Let us now inquire whether the scripture account of idolatry does not apply to the host as exactly as to any other false God. Worship intended for the true God, if addressed to the work of men's hands, is denounced in scripture as idolatry. So the worship of Aaron's calf is said by Aaron himself to be a feast to Jehovah. (Exod. xxxii. 5.) Neither he nor the people had any notion that in adoring the image, they were worshipping any other God than he who had delivered them from Egyptian bondage, (Exod. xxxii. 4,) and whom their father had always adored by the name of Jehovah. Under the form or appearance of a calf they worshipped as they supposed the true God, to whom they attributed all the perfections of the divine nature; just as the papists, under the forms or appearances of bread and wine, suppose they are worshipping the true God, Jesus Christ. That the Israelites were guilty of idolatry in paying their devotions to the calf is certain, not only because of the displeasure which God manifested against them,

but because they are directly charged with it in Acts, vii. 41, and in 1 Cor. x. 7, where it is said, "They made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands" "Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Here the words of Moses, in describing the worship of the calf, are cited. (Exod. xxxii. 6.)

What is said by some commentators on the calf being a representation of the Egyptian God, Apis, cannot be reconciled with Moses's account of the matter. For, first. The Israelites could not be so stupid as to believe that Apis had effected their deliverance, because they knew that prayers had been addressed by themselves and their parents for their emancipation; not to an ox, but to Jehovah. Second. Dwelling among the Egyptians so long, they could not but know that Apis was a very different God from the God of Israel; and as the feast of consecration of the calf is expressly said to be "a feast to Jehovah," it is impossible they should take the calf to be the Egyptian god. It is my opinion that the calf was a representation of a cherub, called a calf by way of contempt. This compound figure, with four faces, had more of the ox than of any other animal in its composition: on which account, most probably, the image of Aaron is called a calf, and in Psalm cvi. 20, an ox. It seems pretty evident from the account of Aaron, that this calf was a plural figure: "These be thy gods, O Israel," and yet he made but one. This language is quite correct, supposing the image was that of a cherub; but it is difficult to explain, if it contained nothing more than the likeness of an ox. The shape of the image, however, is a matter of no moment in this controversy.

Here it may be proper to notice a Jesuitical pretence, which has removed the twitchings of many a popish conscience. "If transubstantiation should be false, what can be laid to our charge which we may not defend by all the rules of equity and reason? If we be accused that we took bread to be the body of Christ,

adoring the same as God, so committing idolatry, we may defend, that both for soul and body we are innocent herein. For seeing the body is not made guilty but by a guilty mind, even our body may plead not guilty, seeing our mind, our thoughts, our devotion were totally referred to Christ, whom we truly apprehended by faith, as veiled with the accidents of bread."* If there were any truth in this, it would equally apply to the Israelites, seeing their mind, their thoughts, their devotion were totally referred to Jehovah, whom they truly apprehended by faith, as veiled under the accidents of a calf. But though they referred their worship to Jehovah, yet being offered to a figure of their own making, it is expressly called idolatry. Purity of intention is not to be urged us an excuse in such a case as this. God has prohibited the adoration of any human production, and if men will tread forbidden ground, they must take the consequences.

The method Moses took to cure the people of their idolatry is deserving of notice: "He took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." (Exod. xxxii. 20.) The popish God may be subjected to the same process. You may put him into the fire and burn him to a cinder; but he will not stand the fire as well as the Jewish God did. You may then grind the parched host to powder. I dare say the Israelites lost all confidence in their God when they saw him reduced to an innumerable amount of minute particles; but this instead of staggering the faith of a papist, improves it most materially; for he is taught that "if any one shall deny that in the adorable sacrament of the eucharist whole Christ is contained in each element or species, and in the separate parts of each element or species, a separation being made, he is accursed: so that the papist, instead of having his god destroyed by division, has as many gods as the particles to which he is reduced!

Moses finished the case by making his simple people drink their god : he seemed to be persuaded that no one could be so stupid as to think he could literally swallow the supreme Being. The council of Trent would have taught them better, and would have explained how every believer could eat as well as drink a whole divinity ! The host, like Aaron's idol, or any other made with hands, may be burned, pulverized, mixed with water and drank. As Moses took this method with the calf to convince the people it was no god, the argument must be equally conclusive against the divinity of anything which may be treated in a similar manner ; for if God can really be burned, powdered, and drank, then the piety of the Israelites ought to have been shocked rather than their faith shaken, by the behaviour of their leader to the object of their worship.

Paul taught that, " They be no gods which are made with hands." (Acts. xix. 26.) The true God has expressly forbidden men to employ their hands in making gods, and calls the product of human manufacture " other gods." " Go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me to anger with the works of their hands ; and I will do you no hurt. Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the Lord ; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands, to your own hurt." (Jer. xxv. 6, 7.) " Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images," margin, statues, " out of the midst of thee ; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands." (Micah. v. 13.) " Neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our Gods." (Hosea. xiv. 3.) " Neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves or the images." (Isaiah xvii. 8.) " Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen." (Deut. xxvii. 15.) " And have cast your gods into the fire, for they were no gods, but the work of

men's hands, wood and stone." (2 Kings xix. 18.) "And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense to other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands." (Jer. i. 16.)

It would be easy to multiply texts to the same effect. These however are more than sufficient to show that no human craftsman can make the true God; that all his attempts of this sort provoke the Lord to anger; that the work of human hands is not to be worshipped under pain of the judgment and curse of God. Now for the application of all this: the host is as much the work of man's hands, as any idol that ever was manufactured; the worshippers of it therefore come under all the judgments and curses threatened in the preceeding passages.

I am at a loss to know how a papist will attempt to evade the application of these texts to his wafer God. If he say that the priest does not pretend to make God when he consecrates the host; I answer: neither did Aaron pretend to make Jehovah, when he consecrated the calf: nor did a heathen pretend to create Jupiter, when he consecrated a block of wood or marble, and called it by his name. The god was always supposed to be in existence before the image or statue was made. The materials of which the idols were made were not created by the idols, no more than the bread of the host is made by the priest: all that man's hands can do in the business, is merely to give shape to his lump of matter. And of all the figures given to idols by the whim of man, a wafer is, perhaps, the oddest! The materials varied much; from the precious metals to stone and wood. I do not recollect that any, except the papists, have made a god of paste; but in a religious point of view what the material may be is of no consequence: its being shaped by men's hands and worshipped is the evil; and that is the same whether it be gold, or silver, wood, or dough.

It is not to be supposed that men would be forbidden under pain of the highest displeasure of God, to

worship the work of their own hands, if any such production were proper to be adored. And it would be ludicrous to hear Demetrius and his craftsmen complaining of Paul, as persuading the Ephesians and almost all Asia, that "they be no gods which are made with hands," if Paul himself could produce a whole batch of gods every time he celebrated the eucharist !

The manner in which their god is supposed to be present in the sensible object of adoration, is a matter of no moment. Aaron and his people, no doubt, believed Jehovah possessed the calf, or they could not have thought that when they worshipped it, and sacrificed thereunto, they were keeping "a feast to the Lord." (Exod. xxxii. 5, 8.) So the heathens supposed the god possessed the image or statue. The Israelites and heathens did not, and could not intend to worship the metal, of which the idols were constructed, but the divinity without it ; and we do not charge the papists with intending to worship bread and wine, but God under these appearances ; but, in truth, God is not specially present, either in Jupiter or the host ; the juggling of priests, under the pretence of consecration, brings no supernatural power into the idol ; after all, therefore, there is nothing really remains but the work of man's hands, and therefore nothing else can receive the worship : hence, in all such cases, the worship is uniformly, in the language of scripture, said to be given to sensible objects, to which it is addressed. If I owe a man five pounds, and leave the money in a house unoccupied, which I mistake for his residence, I may intend he should receive the money, but I have not paid him ; the money is really paid to the house, and not to the creditor. This might be called a foolish, but a pardonable mistake. But if he had informed me previously that he did not dwell in the house, and that I must pay the sum into his hands, the case is altered, and there is nothing to extenuate, either its absurdity or its faultiness. Now as God has forbidden us to worship the works of our hands, we may be certain

that he is not in them by that peculiar presence with which he has promised to meet his people. The act of devotion in such a case, is an act of rebellion: if we intend it for God, he is not there to receive it, and does not accept it; it remains with the visible idol, which is therefore said to be adored.

With regard to the host, it is as much the work of man, as is any god that was ever made. All that a pagan can do in the manufacture of a divinity is merely to shape the matter he selects for his purpose, and then consecrate it. And the god of the papist cannot be produced without attending to these two points. The host must receive its shape from human hands; and it is never allowed to be a god, and entitled to adoration, prior to consecration. And if you apply the quirks of papists, by which they attempt to evade the charge of idolatry, to any other idolater, they will serve equally well for his exculpation.

A god that is deaf and dumb, that can neither hear prayer, nor give instruction, is not the true God. Such were the gods of the heathens, Hebrews ii. 18, 19; 1 Corinthians xii. 2; and such is the god of the papist. Though he is believed by his votaries to be united to a human soul and body in the host, yet he cannot speak. "Woe unto him that saith to the wafer, awake; to the dumb host, arise, it shall teach!" And though the papist protests that it is all-alive-O! yet "there is no breath at all in the midst of it." If the popish god cannot hear and answer prayer, it must be as foolish as it is wicked to worship him. His reputation upon this point therefore must be supported if possible. Most of my readers have heard of the renowned miracle worker, prince Hohenloe. Most of his signs and wonders are effected by the power of the host, during the celebration of the mass. The following cases deserve attention: "Dr. Doyle told us," etc.* In both these instances the cure was to be looked for, and it is affirmed actually took place, "while the adorable

* Ouseley's Old Christianity, pages 393, 394.

sacrifice of the mass was celebrated." Here both the popish bishops evidently lay the emphasis so as that the sacred host may have the credit of working the miracles. Few protestants in this country know what sort of prayers are offered in the service of the mass. At the consecration the worshippers are directed to "make an act of faith in the real presence of their Saviour's body and blood, soul and divinity, under the sacramental veils." Offer your whole self unto him, in the host, "and through him to his Father."* "When the priest elevates the sacred host, bow down yourself, with the greatest reverence, humility, and love to him," that is; to the sacred host, "and say, I adore thee, my Lord and Saviour etc."† This is a very brief specimen of what was going on at the time these afflicted persons were supposed to be cured; and the whole affair was evidently got up to strengthen the faith of implicit believers in transubstantiation. Now what can heretics say to these miracles wrought by the sacred host? They say, "The whole was proved most notorious, arrant frauds," etc. Since these exposures, we have heard no more of Hohenloe's legerdemain tricks. Can impudence blush?

Prescience is an attribute of Jehovah, of which the host and all idols are destitute. They are challenged by God to manifest this perfection: "Produce your cause saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the king of Jacob. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together." (Isaiah xli. 21 — 23.) We learn from this text that we cannot know that being to be God, who cannot predict future events. Now when did the host deliver any predictions? If this be too hard for it, let it exert its power by doing something. We are neither nice, nor extravagant in our demands. "Let it do good, or evil;"—no, the host is quite as inactive as a statue, and can do neither good, nor harm.

* Garden of the Soul, page 80.

† Missal, page 73.

Creation is the work of God; and he who cannot do this work is not divine. "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." (Jer. x. 11.) We know that a host is capable of perishing; but it can give no better evidence than any other idol can, that it created the heavens and the earth.

The true God cannot be thrown away! but idols may, and so may the host: "In that day a man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made, each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats." (Isaiah ii. 20, and xxxi. 7.) "And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city." (2 Chron. xxxiii. 15.) It would be rather easier to toss about the host than these massive divinities.

The true God cannot be stolen. But this has sometimes been the fate of idols, and of the host. "Wherefore," says Laban to Jacob, "hast thou stolen my gods?" Micah said to the children of Dan, "Ye have taken away my gods which I have made, and the priest, and ye are gone away; and what have I more?" (Gen. xxxi. 10; Judges xviii. 24.) In the Missal, under the head, "Respecting Defects occurring in the Mass," see Extracts, we read, "Should the consecrated host disappear, either by accident, or by wind, or miracle, or be devoured by some animal, and cannot be found, then let another be consecrated. If, after consecration, a gnat, a spider, or any such thing fall into the chalice, let the priest swallow it with the blood, if he can; but if he fear danger and have a loathing, let him take it out, and wash it with wine, and when mass is ended, burn it, and cast it and the washing into holy ground."

Here it is confessed that the divine Saviour may be blown away "by winds." This seems rather odd, because we read that the winds as well as the seas obey him, and that when he said to the tempest, "Peace, be

still ;” instantly there was a great calm. But when the host, the popish god, mounts the wind, he cannot guide his Pegasus, but is run away with. The true Christ can ride in the tempest and direct the storm. It is confessed too that this popish god may “ be devoured by some animal.” For instance, by a mouse, a rat, or a pig ; this god may be stolen and devoured by a vile quadruped ! If the thief could be caught, what would they do with it ? Do with it ! why worship it to be sure, on account of the divinity within it ! No ; the villain must be punished. If a spider get into the chalice, the priest may catch the rogue ; and as it may have tasted the contents, or, at least, some portion may adhere to it so closely that the priest cannot separate them ; and as every separate particle of the consecrated element contains “ whole Christ, body and blood, soul and divinity ;” here it is clearly made out that God is stolen, and either “ devoured ” or intended so to be. Now the holy catholic and apostolic church has decreed in this case, most equitably, that the devouring thief shall be devoured. “ Let the priest swallow it with the blood, if he can.” The *if*, I presume, is quite unnecessary ; for, considering how many camels a priest has to swallow, there can be no fear of a spider sticking fast in his throat. “ But if he fear danger,” — from what ? not from the spider, surely, when God enters the belly along with it ! If he have but faith, he may cheerfully sing, when he has finished the draught, “ I will fear no evil, for thou art with me !” To fear danger must imply a mean opinion of the god. But if the priest should “ have a loathing,” why then, shame on him, I say, if his stomach should refuse a whole Christ, because he happened to be accompanied with a spider ; he would deserve a good roasting in purgatory for his squeamishness. But if, after all, the priest boggle and refuse to devour the thief, he is to “ wash and burn it ; and to cast it and the washing into holy ground.” Now if the insect had a particle of the consecrated matter either in it, or about it, when cast into the fire, then whole Christ would be burned along with

it: and that the papists suppose the insect to be in possession of Christ is pretty manifest from the direction to bury the ashes in holy ground; for they do not consider a mere spider to be holy, or to be entitled to christian burial; it is because Christ is united to the spider, that it receives so honourable a funeral. Now this is really worse than the Jews: they crucified the true Christ, it is true; but the apostle bears them testimony, they did it in ignorance. For had they known, says he, "They would not have crucified the Lord of glory." But the papists, on the supposition that the Lord of glory is attached to the fly, command it to be burned. Neither Jew nor heathen ever matched this:—to throw the god they worshipped into fire!

The true God cannot tumble down and dirty himself. I suppose I need not stay to prove this. But heathen and popish gods are liable to such accidents. Dagon fell before the ark. (1 Sam. v. 3, 4.) And, "If the consecrated host, or any part of it, fall upon the ground, let it be reverently taken up, and the place where it fell cleansed, and a little scraped, and let the dust or scrapings of that nature, be thrown into ground."* If his godship should fall, he is to be reverently taken up. Very pious. But suppose, in a procession, he should have the mishap to fall into a heap of ordure, I wonder who could reverently take him up and eat him! And how delicious a job would it be to scrape up the mass on which he fell! and to deposit the sacred scrapings in holy ground!

The true God cannot be taken captive. I am sure this requires no proof. But heathen and popish gods have suffered this calamity. "And shall carry captives into Egypt their gods." (Dan. xi. 8.) And that the popish god has been sent into captivity, take the following proof: The Abbe de la Mennais, in proof of the disbelief of the youth of France in the doctrines of the catholic church, states, that he recently detected

forty of the students of the college of Paris, when at mass, secreting the consecrated wafer, instead of swallowing it; and that they wrote letters to their friends, informing them what they had done, and closing their letters with the wafers instead of wax.* This is a singular sort of drudgery to impose upon divinities. Can God be stuck to a piece of paper, and made to keep the secret of a gallant's amorous epistle to his mistress? The educated youth of Paris see through the cheat, and so do the priests. If the host were really Christ in his humanity and divinity, then God was really sent with these letters of love, and in the shape of a wafer, preserved the secret until it reached its destination. The most monstrous absurdities of heathenism were nothing in comparison of this!

God cannot be burned. But heathen gods have been tried in the fire and consumed: "And when they had left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire." (1 Chron. xiv. 12, see also 2 Kings xix. 18.) I have given an instance in which the papists themselves have directed a burning of insects to which their god is presumed to be attached; and who must himself, of course, in such a case, share the fate of his little companion. A papist does not pretend that the host will not consume in the fire.

Gods, that can give no evidence of life or power, are not truly divine; but such are the gods of the heathen and of the Romanists: "Their idols are silver and gold; the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat." "They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship it. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and

* Christian Observer for March, 1829, page 184.

he standeth ; from his place shall he not remove : yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble." "One cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workmen, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold ; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not : they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them ; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good." (Psalm cxv. 4—7 ; cxxxv. 15, etc. ; Isaiah xlv. 6, 7 ; Jer. x. 3—5.) This is all banter, and would be profane in the extreme, if anything like it could be predicated of the Most High. But this raillery will equally apply to the popish god, if bread be substituted in the place of metal and timber. The gods mentioned in these texts had the human shape, and the popish god is said, to have the human body and soul connected with his divinity : he must therefore have the parts of a human body, such as the eyes, nose, mouth, etc. You may therefore jeer these bread worshippers : "Their idols are bread, the work of men's hands. They have mouths but they speak not ; eyes have they, but they see not ;" etc. They lavish "meal" out of the bag, and hire a "priest," and he maketh it a god. They fall down, yea, they worship it. They carry him and set him in his place. From his place he shall not remove. Yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble." "They must needs be borne, because they cannot go : be not afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good." Isaiah xlv. 9—20, contains a most satirical description of the process of making a god, and shows the absurdity of constructing him out of materials which are used in the ordinary affairs of life. Thus an ash is planted and grows to maturity ; it is then cut down and divided. With one part the man makes a fire, warms himself, bakes bread and roasts flesh for his dinner, and he is satisfied ; yea, he warmeth himself and saith, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire ;" the

other part is made into a god and worshipped. Can anything be more ridiculous? So the wheat is sown, "and the rain doth nourish it;" when ripe it is cut down and trodden out, taken to the mill and ground. With part of it he maketh bread, and eateth of it, and is satisfied: "And the residue thereof he maketh a god; he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god." The one process is quite as silly as the other. In all the above instances the host answers exactly to the description of the idols; but these idols are placed in opposition and contrast to the Almighty; the host therefore is not God, but an idol. If all the characters of an idol met in the supreme Being, he could not be distinguished from it. It is remarkable too, that in determining the question as to whether a certain being be God, or not, the appeal is made to our senses. When we are told that these false gods cannot see, hear, smell, taste, feel, breathe, move, or do good or evil, etc., our senses bear witness to the truth of these affirmations, and our reason draws the inference, that a dead stock or stone cannot be the living God. But as far as we can judge by our senses, the host is as destitute as a stock or a stone of any principle of life; and as God refers the matter to the decision of our senses, we have his warrant to bring the host, or any other pretended divinity to the same test. If the host may be alive without performing any of the functions of a living being, the same may be said of idols: like it, they may seem to be dead, and yet be alive; and if it be a virtue to believe against the senses in one case, it cannot be a sin to believe against them in the other; and then we have no means left of judging which is the true God, and which an idol. Pagan priests have as much right as popish priests have, to require their people to believe their god is alive, in spite of their senses, which testify that he is dead; and if you grant this, it is impossible to prove their idols are not real divinities. This plea against the senses can only serve the cause of error. We take the test which God has

supplied; we bring both pagan and popish gods to it, and the former turn out to be mere blocks of metal or timber, and the latter only a crust, and we throw them all away to the moles and to the bats, and have done with them for ever.

In some respects, however, the popish absurdities far exceed anything recorded in scripture of idolaters. Some heathens have made gods and then worshipped them; but these gods were never eaten: others have worshipped gods and eaten them, but these gods were the productions of nature and not of human fabrication: it was reserved for the papists to unite these monstrosities. They are the only people I have read of, who make a god, then bend the knee to him in adoration, and then pop him into their mouth and devour him.

In the Missal we read, "If anything poisoned shall have touched the consecrated wafer, then let the priest consecrate another, and let him take this in the manner directed, and let the former be preserved in the tabernacle in a separate place, until it be corrupted, and after that be thrown into holy ground."* If poison shall have touched the host,—query, Is the host poisoned? Is Christ killed by it? Poisoned hosts have been sometimes administered. In the year 1313, the emperor, Henry VII., was poisoned in the host by a monk who was suborned by pope Clemens V. An Arian princess had been taken off in the same manner.† If a few grains of arsenic were mixed with the bread, though the priest would venture his salvation upon it, that, by consecration, the bread is changed into the body of Christ, yet he dare not venture his life upon it, the arsenic is changed; he dare not swallow the host. Those who take a poisoned host, do not find it literally the bread of life.

"If the priest vomit the eucharist, and the species appear entire, he must piously swallow it again; but if nausea prevent him, then let the consecrated species be cautiously separated, and put in some holy

* Extracts, p. 10.

† Jortin, vol. 3, p. 370.

place," etc.* "The eucharist," the reader is to recollect, "contains whole Christ, body, soul, and divinity;" and here, in a popish prayer book for public worship, it is supposed a priest may vomit up the divine Saviour. Then he is required, like a dog, to turn to his own vomit, and lick it up again. But it is imagined that the sight of his god may sicken him, in which case he is to be excused. Since a priest may be sick of his god, I hope the papists will not be offended if we are sick of him too: indeed such work as this is enough to sicken any beast.

"If in winter the blood be frozen in the cup, let the cup be covered round with warm cloths; if that will not do, let it be put into boiling water near the altar, till it be melted; taking care that the water does not get into the cup."† The blood of Christ frozen, and yet his soul and divinity are supposed to be united to that blood! Any medical man can inform you that no man can be alive when his blood is all frozen. The soul and divinity must have kept out the frost, or the frost must have expelled the soul and divinity. Here is a god frozen up in a cup! Have pity upon him, and swaddle him in warm cloths! If these do not liquify him, put the cup into boiling water, but "take care that the water does not get into the cup," or you will scald your god and saviour to death. Is it possible for protestants to represent the doctrine of transubstantiation in a more contemptible light than the papists themselves have done in these extracts?

When the church of Rome began to teach the doctrine that the body and blood of Christ were literally swallowed by the faithful in the Lord's supper, the famous question was mooted as to what became of them. Amalarius had an infirmity which obliged him to spit very frequently, and a holy monk, Gontardus, was scandalized at observing him to do this soon after his receiving the eucharist, supposing he might eject some part of the Saviour's body, the fear of which caused

* Ouseley's Old Chris., p. 41.

† Extracts, p. 10.

other parts to avoid the practice at such a time. He replies that, being a phlegmatic man, he could not long forbear spitting; and expresses a hope that God will not deprive him of the benefit of the sacrament on account of his infirmity; and ventures to suggest that, "It is needful to inquire whether our Saviour's body, after it is received with an upright intention, be invisibly raised up into heaven, or kept in our body till its burial; whether it be exhaled into the air, or issues out of the body with the blood, or through the pores; the Lord saying, that whatever enters into the mouth, goeth down into the belly, and thence into the draught."

Some divines contended that it was more decent to suppose either that the species are annihilated, or have a perpetual being, or are changed into flesh and blood, than that any part of them should be evacuated as excrements. Each of these opinions had its advocates. Those who were for the latter, argued from the words of our Lord, that what goeth into the mouth, is subjected to the ordinary processes of nature. This opinion, however, was unpopular as derogating from the dignity of our Lord's body; and its abettors were stigmatised with the delicate title of Stercorists. When the question was entertained by the schoolmen, some centuries after, they determined that "the species of eucharist may be corrupted and converted into another substance; God, by his infinite power, producing another matter instead of that which is converted into the body and blood of our Saviour.* Thus the Stercorists carried the day, but it was with the help of a miracle. It seems the sacred host may be corrupted; but when this has taken place, it is no longer the body of Christ, but is changed into another substance; and it is this other substance, and not the body of Christ, that is stercoreated. Here is a second transubstantiation. The first is on the altar, where the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ; the second

* See this subject handled more at large in Du Pin, vol. 7, cent 9, chap. 7.

is in the entrails of the papist, where the body and blood of Christ are changed into another substance. This is the usual course of things—one absurdity begets another. After all, I think the evacuated matter ought to be revered by a papist. He honours many a relic on account of what it has been, which has not so good a claim to his regard. Look at the *faces*, and indulge in pious meditations: “This was once bread—then the body of Christ!—and now a t——!” Take it up; consecrate and enshrine it; and then pray before it: it will be a sweet smelling savour!

But the most astonishing and alarming circumstance is, that a papist, upon his own principles, has no security that, in worshipping the host, he is not guilty of gross idolatry, in worshipping nothing but a bit of bread. There may be so many defects in the celebration of the mass, that no one can be sure the sacrament is really made. Several of these stated in “Extracts from Authentic Documents,” and taken from Rom. Missals, printed in 1822 and 1827, by Coyne, Dublin, I will now put down: “A defect may happen,” etc. “If the bread,” etc. “If the wine,” etc. “If he discover this,” etc. “If any one shall have,” etc. “The defects on the part,” etc. “If any one does not intend,” etc. “If any one shall have said,” etc. Let any one of the laity look at these defects, all of which are capital, and then ask himself whether it be possible he should know that a true sacrament is made! And yet if it be not, he is undone for ever; because he worships the creature instead of the Creator. Further. Because he cannot know that the sacrament is made, he ought to conclude that God does not require him to worship it. Since idolatry is so severely denounced in scripture, it must be our duty to avoid what may probably, or even possibly, involve such an act; for God cannot require us to risk our salvation in his service. That there can be no divine obligation to worship the eucharist is plain enough from the example of the apostles and primitive christians, who are never once reported in the sacred writings to have adored it.

If the officiating minister have not priestly orders, his ministrations are vitiated. It is a principle with the papists that the priestly office cannot legally be assumed by any one, nor conferred by an heretic, a schismatic, or an excommunicated person. So that no man can be sure that he is a lawful priest, except he can trace his orders back to an inspired Apostle, through a regular succession of duly ordained ministers; and this no man living can do. In different ages many have intruded into the priesthood without any ordination; and thousands who have conferred orders have been in heresy, schism, or excommunication, at the time, and have thus perpetuated a race of priests without any valid title. Besides intention is of as much importance in ordination as in the eucharist: "If any one shall have said," etc., page 8th. Now it is utterly impossible to know with certainty another man's intention. And if in the line of succession from the apostles down to the present priest, intention was wanting in the ordainer, in a single instance, all the remainder in the succession are no true priests. This involves all in uncertainty; and there is not a priest in christendom can prove that he has valid holy orders. This is a subject which must not be left to chance; no, nor even to probability. I ought to have positive certainty, when performing my devotions, that I am not guilty of idolatry. But a papist has not even probability for his faith. For it is every thing but certain that intention has been wanting in some one included in the line of succession; for according to the Romish writers themselves, the priesthood generally, during the dark ages, that is, for several centuries, were depraved in the extreme, being guilty of simony, drunkenness, whoredom, sodomy, etc. etc. Now it is not to be supposed that minds so depraved would in every instance, through many centuries, administer the sacrament of holy orders with a right intention. Further. Not a few both of bishops and priests have been infidels. The popes John XII. and John XXIII. were as clearly convicted of infidelity, as

ever guilt was proved in a court of judicature ; the former in a council at Rome, the latter in a council of Constance. Leo the X. is commonly reported to have said to Peter Bembus, his secretary, "What profit does the fable of Jesus bring us in ?" and his life was in strict accordance with such a confession. Several other popes are suspected to have been no better. There is good reason to believe that a large portion of the Romish priests are disguised infidels. Blanco White affirms that a great part of the clergy, and of the higher classes in Spain, are infidels, and are only restrained by the inquisition from casting off the Romish yoke. And we know that the clergy in France must have been generally sceptical prior to the revolution, or the principal part of them would not, on the dissolution of the government, have openly professed atheism. An infidel cannot believe that any divine virtue is communicated by the sacraments, and therefore cannot have a right intention in administering them ; for it is impossible he should intend to convey what he is persuaded he cannot convey. The sacrament of holy orders must have been vitiated in numerous instances by the infidelity of the administrators. All the recipients in such cases, though they actually received no orders, are, notwithstanding, generally under an impression that their orders are valid. These may administer with intention, and yet, not being in the ministry themselves, they cannot initiate others ; so that no one can calculate the extent of the mischief. A few generations would be sufficient to invalidate the services of the sincere as well as the vicious. The probabilities therefore are very great against any particular priest being really in the priesthood. Thus in reference to the eucharist, the priest may not be in holy orders, and then his good intention cannot make a sacrament. Or he may be a disguised infidel, or a malignant, or be thinking of something false at the time of consecrating, in all which cases no sacrament is made.

The doctrine of intention was invented, no doubt, to bring the people into a state of slavish subjection to

the priests. For if the priest be offended, he may purposely withhold intention, and then the recipient loses the benefit of the sacrament; and in worshipping the host, he is involved in the guilt of idolatry. But if there were any truth in the doctrine, the priests would be involved in the same peril as the people, when they receive the sacraments. But this I believe gives them very little uneasiness—they see through the cheat; and while the laity tremble, they laugh in their sleeve!

“If the bread be in any way corrupted, the sacrament is not made.” And yet the people have no opportunity of examining it when they do not receive it; and when they do, the worship is performed before it is given them: and even then they are required to swallow it, whole, if possible, in which case they cannot detect any corrupt matter that may be in it. And the priest is in pretty much the same uncertainty as the people upon this point. It seems that the making these blessed wafers is a matter of trade among the papists. The following advertisement is copied from the cover of the Laity’s Directory for 1827:—

“ALTAR BREAD.”

“Agnes Collison respectfully acquaints the Reverend Clergy, that she made the Altar Bread for her father during his last illness, and for a considerable time before; and that the approbation of the Altar Bread of her late father, published by authority in the *Ordo Recitandi*, has been graciously continued by his lordship to herself; and that it will be her constant endeavour, by punctuality and fidelity, to merit a continuance of the honourable approbation she has received.”

From “A New Year’s Gift,” in the above Directory, by Wm. Bishop, of Halia, Vic. Apos., in the London district:—

“What does the communicant, on earth, receive in the holy sacrament? He receives truly, really, and substantially, the same Jesus Christ whom the blessed souls behold in his glory in heaven. And in the

communion, the priest and faithful on earth are really united to the same Saviour, to whom the faithful are united in glory.

“ Who is he, whom you here receive, not in figure only, but in substance ; not in an empty commemoration, but in his real presence under the appearance of bread ? It is God the Son made man, truly and really present under the external form. It is Jesus Christ himself, true God, and true man, in all the infinite attributes of his divine nature, and in all the glorious perfections of his human nature. It is Jesus Christ, who, as God, is omnipotent, infinitely good, holy, just, and merciful, as the Father. This is he whom Mary possessed, as God and man, within her sacred womb, for nine months. This is he, whom you possess, as God and man, within you, as soon as you have received the holy communion. You receive the same Jesus Christ, with this difference : that, in the womb of Mary, his body was in a mortal state ; but, as received by you, his body is in an immortal and glorious state.

“ He comes to us in this sacrament, to receive the homage of our love. Let us then offer ourselves wholly to him ; our minds filled with the highest esteem of his glory and perfections ; our hearts inflamed with the most ardent affections for him ; our wills, totally subject and conformable to his will in all things : in such dispositions of benevolent and grateful love, let us approach to Christ, and unite ourselves to him in the sacrament of his love.

“ Solicit the intercession of the blessed virgin, and of all the angels and saints, that you may worthily and devoutly receive him under the veil of the sacrament, whom they behold in glory.

“ At the moment of communion, if your eyes were opened to behold the glory that surrounds you, what should you see ? Jesus Christ, purer than the whitest snow, brighter than the brightest rays of the sun, in the majesty and glory of the Son of God, attended by heavenly spirits, veiling their faces, as not daring

steadfastly to behold the countenance of him whom you receive. But, in condescension to your weakness, he withdraws his splendours from your sight, which could not bear them, and hides them under sacramental veils. Receive then, with a lively faith and an ardent charity, receive with calm joy, Jesus, the Son of God made man, into your breast.

“What a moment, the moment of your communion! If there be any moment, in which a foretaste of heaven can be experienced, it must be that moment, and the moments that immediately follow, till the sacramental species are dissolved. Your breast is then a little heaven, blessed with the presence of the King of Glory.”

There is a letter from the same bishop, in the same work, page 1, addressed, “To all the clergy, and faithful in the London district:—”

“Dearly beloved brethren in Jesus Christ,—

“We feel it our duty to inform you, that only those French clergymen are permitted to administer any sacrament, or to say mass, or to perform any ecclesiastical function in the London district, who have subscribed the form of declaration of Catholic communion which we have required, and which his holiness has commanded them all to sign, declaring that if they refuse to do what he commands in this respect, they contract the heinous guilt of schism,” etc.

Agnes Collison’s advertisement may remind my readers of another that appeared in the papers some time ago, copied from a Journal in the East Indies, in which a god maker solicits the patronage of the public on account of the excellency and cheapness of his divinities. These heathen gods would not be entitled to adoration till they had been consecrated by a Bramin, no more than Agnes Collison’s altar bread, till it had been consecrated by a popish priest. She may be a very honest woman, for anything I know to the contrary, but I would not venture my salvation upon her, or on any other person’s knowledge and uprightness. We know what tricks are played by many dealers in

flour, in mixing with it potatoes, plaster of Paris, etc. ; and neither priest nor people can be sure that their altar bread is not adulterated ; and if it be, why then they are idolaters. Thus in whatever light the worship of the host is considered, it is rendering that homage to a creature, to a nothing, that is due to God alone, and is justly branded as the most stupid and senseless idolatry : and if they are vile who render such worship to any but the living God, much more abominable and fiend-like are they, who have the daring to demand it from man for any other than his Creator and Redeemer, and threaten him with every kind and degree of vengeance if he yield it not.

SERMONS AND SKETCHES OF
SERMONS.

SERMONS AND SKETCHES OF SERMONS.

SERMONS.

*Two Sermons on the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, preached at
the Orphan House, Newcastle, Dec. 25th and 26th, 1808.*

In his preface to these sermons, the author observes, that they were the first he ever wrote; and that he was not able to set about the writing of them till a month after they were preached; the reader will not expect, therefore, (says he,) that they are committed to the press verbatim as they were delivered from the pulpit. The ideas are the same, with two or three additions; but it was both impossible and unnecessary to recollect the words. The matter of a sermon, and not the language, is what demands our chief attention. This is the age of wordy preaching—a glitter of fine phrases, and poverty of sentiment—a monkey arrayed in all the robes of royalty. The author has been accustomed to preach to poor, plain people; he has made it his study to accommodate his discourses to their capacities; hence he has acquired the habit of using great plainness of speech. To those who love the important truths of the gospel in a quaker dress, the following sermons will be acceptable.

But why is this publication obtruded upon the world? If the reader, after a serious perusal, can say nothing in its justification, the author will offer no excuses, but will, with all possible patience, endure any

reasonable correction. He knows it is usual on such occasions, to throw the blame upon friends. "The author had not the most distant intention to publish—is very sensible how unfit his performance is to meet the public eye; but friends solicited, and their importunity became irresistible." This is ungenerous. Those weak friends, at whose request a work of no worth is sent abroad into the world, merit public censure; but the author, whose reputation they no doubt consulted, ought not to be the first to expose them to it.

These sermons contain very little original matter. The substance of them is to be found in a great number of works. Why then bring forward again what has been said so often? Some will read these sermons who have not the disposition to purchase volumes; and others, because they have not the power. Thus knowledge will be increased, and the great design of the gospel will be promoted.

SERMON I.

"Concerning his Son, Jesus Christ, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom i. 3, 4.)

THE Apostle John has remarked at the close of his gospel, that if all had been written concerning the works of the Redeemer, which might have been written, he supposed that even the world itself could not have contained the books; and if I were to say concerning his person, all that might be said, I suppose this assembly would never break up—I might continue my speech through an endless duration. My subject, therefore, is very copious; but I intend to limit my observations principally to his twofold nature.

He "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh:" this refers to his human nature. He was declared, or demonstrated to be, (not made,) the Son of

God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: this refers to his divine nature. But how could his resurrection be a demonstration of his divinity? It was not simply the circumstance of his being raised from the dead, but his raising himself, which proved him to be more than mortal. He taught publicly that he had power to raise himself from the dead: "Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, what sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spake of the temple of his body. When, therefore, he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them: and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said." "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John ii. 18—22, and x. 17, 18.) No mere creature can do this. It would be easier to resist the attacks of death, than to rescue the prey out of his teeth. Only he who first united soul and body, can re-unite them. Jesus Christ, then, by rising from the dead, demonstrated himself to be a divine person.

In further addressing you upon these interesting subjects, I intend to pursue the following order:—

I. Prove by a variety of arguments the proper divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Show that in point of personality he is distinct from the Father.

III. Make some observations on his human nature. And,—

IV. Assign some reasons why it is necessary he should be both divine and human.

I. Jesus Christ is a divine person. This doctrine is not built upon a few detached passages of scripture; it is interwoven throughout the texture of the sacred volume. The difficulty is not to find proofs, but to make a judicious selection out of an almost infinite

number; for it is impossible to bring the whole into view, within the compass of a single sermon. Divine titles are given him: divine perfections are ascribed to him: divine works are wrought by him: divine honours are paid to him. I will just glance at each of these particulars.

1. Divine titles are given him. He is called God: and the connexion, in many places where the word occurs, determines the sense in which it is to be taken:—it cannot denote less than proper divinity. He is over all, God blessed for ever: he is the great God: he is the only wise God: he is the true God. (Rom. ix. 5; Titus ii. 13; Jude 25; 1 John v. 20.) The mythology of the heathens included in it a great number of demons who were supposed to be a sort of inferior divinities, subject to the one supreme God. To exclude entirely such low notions of Jesus Christ, as though he were only like one of these demons, the apostle tells Titus, who was a Gentile, that he is the great God; and the Romans, that he is over all—terms which they could not but understand as designating the supreme Being. And since Christ is also the only wise God, and the true God, if there be another god who differs from him in any attribute or property, he must be both a foolish and a false god. Thus the poor subterfuge is cut off, that Jesus Christ is a God by office, or delegation, and not by nature.

He is called Jehovah, which word denotes self-existence: “I saw Jehovah sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings: with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. Then said I, wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, Jehovah of hosts.” (Isaiah vi. 1—5.) The Apostle John refers

to this display of the divine glory : " Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, he hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." (John xii. 39 — 41.) The quotation of the apostle is taken from the tenth verse of this chapter : " Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes ; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." It is clear, therefore, that the apostle refers to this vision of the prophet ; and that infallible interpreter assures us, that the glory of Jehovah, which the prophet saw, was indeed the glory of our blessed Saviour. Here, then, we have incontestible evidence of Christ being called Jehovah no less than six times in one chapter.

Let us turn aside for a moment and see this great sight—the glory of our divine Emmanuel. Behold his exaltation ! He is " sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up." Observe his train ! All the holy angels are his retinue. (Matt. xxv. 31.) See with what reverence the flaming seraphim move in his presence ! — their faces veiled, not daring to gaze on the effulgence of his glory, and in solemn accents crying, " Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts." Who is this king of glory ? Is he a mere man ? Is he an angel ? You hear the apostle say, " It is Jesus," fall down, like Thomas, and adore your Lord and God.

" I will only mention another passage where Christ is stiled Jehovah : " Tell ye and bring them near ; yea, let them take counsel together : who hath declared this from ancient time ? Who hath told it from that time ? Have not I Jehovah : And there is no God else besides me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth ; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall

swear. Surely, shall one say, in Jehovah have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." (Isaiah xlv. 21—25.) The apostle Paul has twice applied this passage to our Lord: "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." "That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." (Rom. xiv. 10, 11; Phil. ii. 10, 11.) The apostle cites the prophet to prove, that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that at his name every knee shall bow, and that every tongue shall confess him to be Lord. But the words of the prophet cannot, by any possible construction, prove these things upon any other supposition than that the Jehovah God, whom he speaks of, is our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Saviour, then, is called Jehovah three times in this passage; and the peculiarity of the phraseology employed, shows that none other than the supreme Being can be intended: "There is no God else besides me, a just God, and a Saviour, there is none besides me." "I am God, and there is none else." This language is utterly inconsistent with the notion that this Jehovah God is a creature. Hence it is evident, that the term itself, which denotes self-existence, and the connexion in which it stands when applied to Christ, both prove, as far as language can prove anything, the proper divinity of our glorious Redeemer.

2. Divine perfections are ascribed to him. Every feature of divinity is visible in Jesus, and he answers to the whole of the divine character, as the impression on the wax answers to the seal. "He is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person." "He thought it no robbery to be equal with God." (Heb. i. 3; Phil. ii. 6.)

He is eternal. Isaiah calls him, "The everlasting Father." (Chapter ix. 6.) He was when the first act of creation took place, and, therefore, must have existed from all eternity. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." (John i. 1, 2.) He revealed himself to the apostle John as "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come." "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." (Rev. i. 8, 11.) It seems scarcely possible to express the whole of duration, past, present, and to come, in terms more significant. He is expressly called "eternal life." (1 John v. 20.) Now if he be an eternal Being, he must be self-existent, independent, and, in short, must possess every perfection of the divine nature.

He is omnipotent. The prophet Isaiah calls him, "The Almighty God," and he calls himself, "The Almighty." (Isaiah ix. 6; Rev. i. 8.) It would be an insult to common sense to call any creature, however exalted, almighty.

He is omnipresent. He "filleth all in all," (Ephes. i. 23,) which no creature can possibly do. He says, (Matt. xviii. 20,) "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is no improbable supposition, that there are thousands of congregations, in different parts of the world, assembled for divine worship at the same time. Jesus Christ, according to his promise, is present with them all; but no creature can be in two places at the same time; it follows that Jesus Christ is that immense Being who fills all space.

He is omniscient. We often read of Jesus knowing the hearts of men. He himself declares, "All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts." (Rev. ii. 23.) The apostle Peter confessed, "Lord, thou knowest all things." (John xxi. 17.) Jesus could not search the reins and the hearts of all his professed disciples; much less could he

know all things, if he were not the omniscient God, whose eyes run to and fro in the earth, beholding the evil and the good; for Solomon, in his admirable prayer at the dedication of the temple, restricts the knowledge of the hearts of men to Jehovah exclusively: "Thou," says he, "even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." (1 Kings viii. 30.)

He is immutable. We read, (Heb. xiii. 8,) "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." God the Father bears testimony to this important truth. "And thou, Lord," says he, addressing himself to the Son, "in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." (Heb. i. 10—12.) If all the dignity of Christ were derived, he was not the same yesterday that he is to-day; he has changed, and he may change again. It is said of created things, "They shall be changed;" but it is said of Christ, in opposition to them, "But thou art the same." The antithesis here shows, that our Lord is uncreated, and unchangeable. If there be one divine perfection more incommunicable than another, it is immutability.

Now supposing it were matter of doubt whether the titles God and Jehovah, when given to Christ, are to be taken in their proper sense, that doubt is removed by the evidence we have just been considering; for that being who is eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, and immutable, must be strictly and necessarily God.

3. Divine works are wrought by him. He created all things. "By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him." "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." (Col. i. 16; John

1—3.) Jesus Christ created all visible things. Lift up your eyes, and behold thousands of worlds proclaiming the Godhead and glory of their divine Original: "The heavens declare the glory of God: the firmament sheweth his handy-work." (Psalm xix. 1.) Jesus Christ created all invisible things. Employ your imaginations: try to penetrate to the utmost boundaries of space: conceive of millions of worlds scattered through the vast expanse. These were all formed by the all-creative word of our Lord and Saviour. In fact, everything that ever was created owes its existence to him; for "without him was not anything made that was made." Yes, say some, he was employed by the Almighty as an agent to do his work; and this is perfectly consistent with inferiority of nature. But the truth is, Jesus Christ did not create for another, but for himself. The apostle assures us, that all things were created for him, as well as by him.

I maintain that no being but the supreme God could possibly create all things. You say Christ was the great agent employed in creating the universe: you say he is not properly God: and you call yourself a rational christian. Now suppose you were disputing with an atheist about the existence of the supreme Being, would you not first endeavour to prove to him that the universe was created, and then that its creator must be self-existent independent, almighty, and immutable? From its beauty, order, harmony, and the exquisite mechanism of its different parts, would you not insist that he must be infinitely wise? From its adaptation to the most beneficial purposes, would you not infer that he must be infinitely good? And when you had proved all this, would you not think that you had completed your argument? Now, if the works of nature prove to an atheist that their Creator must be a being of infinite perfections; and if you confess, as the New Testament teaches, that their Creator was Jesus Christ, how can you with any consistency deny, that Jesus Christ is truly divine?

There is no other way of proving the existence of

God than by his works; if, therefore, we ascribe creation to Christ, and yet deny his divinity, we cannot prove that there is a God. You perhaps will reply, "Revelation may teach, that a creature made the universe, and that God made that creature." The supposition contradicts a first principle of natural religion, acknowledged by mankind in all nations, and in all ages, namely, that God made all things. Revelation adds to the principles of natural religion; but it does not, it cannot destroy them. Accordingly we find, that it recognises the principle in question. The apostle lays down a self-evident proposition, when he says, "Every house is builded by some man," and he justly infers from it, "He that built all things is God." (Heb. iii. 4; so again Rom. i. 20.) "For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." But the heathen world could not have been "without excuse," for not believing the "eternal power and Godhead" of the Creator, nor for neglecting to glorify him as God, (which the apostle charges them with in the next verse,) if he were indeed a creature. On the contrary, to have called him the "eternal power and Godhead," would have been blasphemy, and to have glorified him as God would have been idolatry. Since, therefore, it is confessed that Christ created all things, christians are "without excuse" if they deny his divinity, or refuse to pay him divine honours.

He preserves all things. "By him all things consist." "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." (Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 3.) Can a creature support the universe by a word? Can a creature support the universe at all? There can be only one answer to these questions—No. That God who spake so many worlds from nothing, and he only, is able to perpetuate their existence.

As God, he pardoneth sin. To forgive sin, is the exclusive prerogative of that God against whom it is

committed. Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy, "Thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the pharisees began to reason, saying, who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" (Luke v. 20, 21.) The scribes and pharisees were right in saying, that none but God could forgive sins. The apostle assures us, "It is God that justifieth." (Rom. viii. 33.) They charged our Lord with blasphemy under the persuasion that he was a mere man. Instead of showing that any mortal could grant absolution and remission of sin, or that he did it by virtue of authority from the Father, Jesus replied, "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he saith unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed unto his own house glorifying God." His working this miracle in his own name, to show that he himself had power to forgive sins, was refuting the charge of blasphemy by proving his divinity.

As God, he operates upon the minds of the saints. "He promised his disciples, "Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." "He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and will make our abode with him." (John xiv. 20—23.) The apostle enjoyed this presence of Christ: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) This divine influence was his strength and comfort: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ, may rest upon me." (Phil. iv. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 9.) Those who are destitute of the presence of Christ, are not his disciples. "Examine

yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves : know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) There are millions of real christians now upon the earth; some in Europe, some in Asia, some in Africa, and some in America: Jesus dwells in all their hearts; but this would be impossible were he a creature; he must therefore be that God who fills immensity.

As God, he rewards the saints with everlasting happiness. "Jehovah will give grace and glory." (Psalm lxxxiv. 11.) Jesus Christ hath promised eternal life to those who serve him. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." (John x. 27, 28. Suppose Christ be not divine, and then this passage presents this strange phenomenon of a creature, for services done to himself, conferring immortality and happiness upon other creatures. A prophet may teach men the will of God, and assure them that the Most High will reward their obedience with the heavenly glory; but a mere prophet never yet pretended to call those who received his doctrines, his servants, nor to promise them that he would raise them from the dead, and grant them endless bliss. Jesus Christ, however, calls those who embrace the christian doctrine, his servants, John xii. 26, and promises that he will raise and glorify their bodies. "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) He will reward them for services done to himself with eternal happiness: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed

me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." (Matt. xxv. 34—36.) It follows, that, if Christ be not God, christians do not serve God, nor will they receive any reward at his hands. The Almighty has declared that he will not give his glory unto another; and yet, on the supposition that Christ is a creature, it is difficult to say how the glory of God could be given to another more completely. To raise the dead, and to confer immortality, are works beyond the ability of any finite being; they are equal to creation out of nothing, and afford the most indubitable proofs of supreme divinity.

4. Divine honours are paid to him. Of these he made a formal claim: "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." (John v. 23.) Jesus had just before told the Jews, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." This incensed them so highly against him, that they "sought the more to kill him, not only because he had broken the Sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." Many have supposed that because Jesus called God his Father, he must be inferior to the Father. In the text just cited we see, that the Jews understood the Son of God to be equal with God. Now supposing they were mistaken, would it not have been proper in our Lord to have set them right? particularly as it was under the notion of his making himself equal with God, that they sought so earnestly to kill him? When the people of Lystra mistook Paul and Barnabas for their gods, and were going to pay them divine honours, these men of God "rent their clothes, and ran in amongst the people, crying out, and saying, sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." (Acts xiv. 14, 15.) But Jesus Christ was so far from showing similar zeal to satisfy the Jews that he was not divine, that he immediately asserts his equality with the Father, in works in general,

and in one work in particular—the raising of the dead. “What things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” “As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.” It does not appear possible to assert equality with God in stronger terms than these. Jesus draws the inference which these premises fully warrant, “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” A stronger passage than this, in favour of the proper divinity of Christ, need not be desired. There is no medium—he was guilty of blasphemy, or he must be divine. Those who deny the Godhead of Christ, pretend a zeal for the honour of God the Father. It would derogate from his honour, they affirm, to put any other being on an equality with him. But our Lord assures us that “he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father.” There is no jealousy of one another among the persons of the Godhead, “He that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father also.” The first christians honoured him as God: “To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” (Jude 25.)

As God he is worshipped. He himself taught, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” (Matt. iv. 10.) The holy martyr, Stephen, however, performed the highest act of religious worship to Jesus Christ with his expiring breath: “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit: and he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts vii. 59, 60.) Happy saint! thou wast ignorant of modern refinement and criticism in divinity, which have robbed thy Lord of his glory. Thy heart never harboured the disposition to which they owe their origin—a coldness of affection! He honoured thee in death, and let thee “see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” Thou wast strengthened by his grace to suf-

fer for his name! Thou prayedst fervently, "Receive my spirit, save my murderers," and sunk into his arms, and fell asleep! O blessed repose! May I thus in a vision leave this world, and wake in heaven!

There are many examples in the New Testament of Jesus Christ being worshipped. It has been said, that he was never worshipped with that religious respect which is due to God. Read Rev. v. 13, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Here we find that the same "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power" are ascribed to the Lamb, as to him that sitteth upon the throne. This is the best comment you can meet with upon those words of our Lord, "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

I intended to have gone through all the particulars this morning, which I announced at the commencement of this discourse; but I have been rambling on, and our time is more than gone already. You know the divinity of our blessed Saviour is a topic which I love to dwell upon. I plead the importance of the subject as an apology for the time I have taken up in discussing it. I must now draw to a conclusion. I intend to speak to the other points at another opportunity.

We are met together this morning to celebrate Messiah's advent. God was manifest in the flesh. He was ushered into the world by a poor woman—in a poor village—in a stable. Can you look through all this poverty and meanness, and recognise the Lord of glory? Several remarkable circumstances will assist your faith. The word of prophecy pointing out the village—the appearance of the angels to the shepherds, proclaiming the birth of a Saviour, Christ the Lord—the star directing the wise men to the place where the young child was:—all these were indications that this

lovely infant was no common personage. The shepherds wondered and rejoiced. The oriental sages worshipped and adored. All the holy angels, though unseen by mortals, attended at his birth: they beheld his glory shining through the human form: they knew their God, and did him homage. (Heb. i. 6.)

“Unto us a child is born, a Son is given. His name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” He came to instruct you—to redeem you—to govern you—to make you happy for ever. Embrace all his doctrines as your prophet; trust to the virtue of his sacrifice, as your atoning priest; obey his laws, as your sovereign; and, like the wise men and the angels, worship him as your God.

When he shall appear the second time to judgment, may we be ready! His divinity will then shine forth in all its glory: may it not prove to us a consuming fire! O thou blessed Jesus, descend now in the power of thy Spirit! Inspire our hearts with devotion and holiness, and prepare us for thy kingdom, for thy mercy’s sake! Amen.

SERMON II.

“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” (Rom. i. 3, 4.)

In speaking to you from these words yesterday morning, I proposed to,—

I. Prove by a variety of arguments the proper divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Show that in point of personality he is distinct from the Father.

III. Make some observations on his human nature, and—

IV. Assign some reasons why it is necessary he should be both divine and human.

Our time was taken up in discussing the first head, under which I attempted to prove the proper divinity of Christ from the divine titles which are given him, — the divine perfections which are ascribed to him, — the divine works which are wrought by him, and the divine honours which are paid to him. I now proceed, —

II. To show that in point of personality he is distinct from the Father. Modern Socinians have been so pressed by argument, that they have been constrained to confess, that in some sense divinity does belong to Christ. But what they grant with one hand, they take away with the other. They tell us that his divinity is the divinity of the Father exerted through him. Thus he performed mighty works by the power of God, like Moses ; and he knew the hearts of men by divine illumination, in the same way that Peter knew the hearts and detected the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira. So that though they confess he exercised the attributes of divinity on some occasions, yet they insist upon it, it is no more than many other good men have done. If this be a true account of the matter, it must be granted, that Christ is no more a divine person than Moses, or Peter, or almost any other saint. The greater part of the former discourse cannot possibly be reconciled with this curious hypothesis. There are several ways of confuting it ; but waving others, for the present, I propose to show that his divinity is not derived, but inherent. This will be done by proving that he is a divine person, distinct from the person of the Father.

Before I enter upon this subject, I beg leave to premise, that my remarks upon it must not be supposed to affect the unity of the divine nature. No doctrine is more clearly revealed than this is, in the sacred scriptures. “The Lord he is God, there is none else besides him.” “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” (Deut. iv. 36 ; and vi. 4.) The distinct personality of Christ does not contradict this first principal of all religion ; for it is no more impossible that

a plurality of divine persons should exist in one divine substance, than that spirit and matter should be united in one person. As to facts—the latter is proved by our own existence, and the former by divine revelation ; but the nature of the union is in both cases alike incomprehensible.

The distinct personality of Christ is proved from Psalm cx. 1 : “ The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Turn over to Matt. xxii. 41—46. Jesus asked the Pharisees, “ What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They said unto him, the son of David. He saith unto them, how then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word.” They could not explain the words of David as referring to his humanity, and they would not confess his divinity : hence they very prudently kept silence ; and it would have been as well, if all the enemies of his dignity and glory had done the same ; but since that time they have taken courage, and have spoken out boldly. Jesus was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. But the passage in question cannot be explained as referring to his human nature, because the words, Son and Lord are put in opposition to each other ; and it is impossible to reconcile them on any other hypothesis than that of a twofold nature. The words of David have, therefore, unquestionable allusion to the divine nature of our Lord. Here, then, the Father is represented as addressing himself to the Son as a divine person. Now if the distinction in the Godhead were a distinction of names only, and not of persons, this passage would present the absurdity of the Father addressing himself to a mere name which is destitute of both consciousness and intelligence, and making a promise to this name of the government of the universe, and of a seat at his right hand. He that can believe this, let him believe it ; and he that cannot, has no al-

ternative—he must believe the distinct personality of Christ.

Again, in Heb. i. 8—14, the Father is represented as addressing himself to the Son. In this passage Christ is expressly called God; he is said to have created heaven and earth, and to be unchangeable. This must refer to his divine nature. Here is incontestible proof of the Father asserting the divinity of the Son; and in doing this, he has given the fullest demonstration of the Son's distinct personality; for it is utterly impossible that the Father should give a divine title, and ascribe divine perfections and divine works to a mere name.

This point might be proved from many other passages of scripture, but I must go on,—

III. To make some observations on the human nature of Jesus Christ. He is called the seed of the woman—the seed of Abraham—the seed of David, according to the flesh. That he possessed a real human body, you none of you have any doubt. Some, however, have supposed that he did not possess a human soul. They have asserted that his divine spirit was to his body in the stead of a human soul. This is inconsistent with such texts as these: “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days.” “He hath suffered, being tempted.” “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Isaiah liii. 10; Heb. ii. 18; Matt. xxvi. 38; Luke xxiii. 46.) The divine Spirit could not be made an offering for sin; he could not suffer from the temptations of the devil; he could not be sorrowful, for he is immutably happy; nor could our Lord commend the divine Spirit into the hands of the Father, for such an act would be an unsuitable expression of dependence. But understand the text as referring to his human soul, and all is plain and clear.

As he partook of human nature, he was not exempt from its common infirmities, such as cold, heat, hun-

ger, thirst, weariness, weakness, pain and death; but he was free from our personal infirmities—he was not born lame, blind, diseased, deformed, etc.; he was fairer than the sons of men.

It is very probable that the human soul of Christ existed prior to the incarnation, though the scriptures are not express upon the subject. The sentiment, I think, may be justly inferred from the following, and such like passages of sacred writ: “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” (John xvii. 5; 2 Cor. viii. 9.) He speaks of a glory which he had previous to the creation of the world: of this glory he was deprived by the incarnation; and he prayed to be restored to it again. The glory of the divine nature cannot change by circumstances; nor can the glory of Christ, as God, depend upon the will of the Father; it is more proper, therefore, to refer this glory to his human soul, and then all difficulties vanish. So of the other passage,—he was rich—he became poor—this indicates change; but the divine nature is immutable. The human soul, however, might be rich in the possession of the glory of heaven, previous to its union with flesh and blood, and by that union become poor. This seems to be the most natural interpretation.*

If the pre-existence of the soul of Christ be admitted, it will assist us in the interpretation of some passages in the Old Testament. We sometimes read of an angel, or angels, appearing to the saints in ancient times. When only one appeared, he was usually stiled Jehovah; and when two, or more appeared, that divine title was usually given to one exclusively. Read at your leisure, Judges vi. and Genesis xviii. It appears

* Such was the notion of Dr. Watts, in his latter days, and next to the orthodox interpretation of the passage, the most natural; but surely not so natural as that.—EDIT.

very strange that the incommunicable name of Jehovah should be given to an angel, and particularly that this honour should be paid exclusively to one, when several were present. You will see the strictest propriety in this, however, if you suppose that the soul of Christ was created before the foundation of the world, that it was united to his divine nature as soon as created, and that it assumed some material vehicle for the purpose of communicating with mortals on important occasions; for upon this supposition, the glorious person addressed was indeed the Jehovah. I have not time to pursue this subject farther.

Many people have very incorrect notions about the union of the two natures in Christ. In some unions the two original natures are lost, and a third is produced by the compound. Thus, some suppose that when the two natures were united in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, he was neither perfect God nor perfect man, but a sort of middle being, betwixt both. This is a great error. Each nature was preserved distinct and entire, notwithstanding the union.

It is difficult to explain such subjects, so as to make them clear to common capacities. The following will serve as a sufficient, though it is not a perfect illustration. It is the best I can think of. Suppose an apple tree divided above the trunk into two large branches; cut off one of these arms, and graft into the stock a scion of another species of apple. The two original natures are preserved, and this one tree will produce two different sorts of fruit.

If we examine the life of Christ, we shall find some things which are proper only to the human nature, and others which could not be done by any but a divine Being. Thus as man he was tempted, and suffered being tempted; but as God the devils were subject to him, and even bore testimony to his divinity. As man, he was asleep in the ship, and was awake by his disciples; but as God, the winds and seas were obedient to his word, and a calm ensued. As man, he cried upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou

forsaken me?" But as God, he conferred immortal bliss upon a confessor; he said to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." I am, —

IV. To assign some reasons why it is necessary he should be both divine and human. I will consider these two separately; and first, as to his divinity.

1. It is necessary Jesus Christ should be divine to make his sacrifice of sufficient efficacy to purge away the sins of the world. No creature could accomplish the great work of human redemption. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him. For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me." (Psalm xlix. 7, 8, 15.) Jesus Christ appeared before God under the character of our substitute; and therefore our sins were imputed unto him. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (Isaiah liii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 24.) Accordingly he suffered in our stead. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." "He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken." "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed," etc. "Christ was once offered to bear the sin of many." (Isaiah liii. 5, 8, 10; Heb. ix. 28.) Now reflect, that every sinner deserves everlasting punishment; that no man can redeem a single brother from the grave, much less from hell; that our sins were imputed to Jesus Christ, and that he suffered for them; and you will be convinced that he must be a divine person, or he could not have been the Saviour of the world.

The scriptures speak of Christ as divine, even when they speak of his sufferings. "Awake, O Sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my

fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." (Zach. xiii. 7; Acts xx. 28: 1 John iii. 16.) The sword of divine justice awakes, and asserts its rights, not against a creature, but "against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord." The church of God was not purchased with the blood of a creature, but with his own blood. You are not called upon to behold, and admire, the love of a creature in dying for you, but "the love of God, because he laid down his life for us."

It has often been objected against the doctrine of the atonement, that Christ did not suffer all that sinners merited; for, it is said, they merited eternal punishment; but he suffered only for a limited period. There are two ways of answering this objection: First. The divine nature of Christ might enable the human nature, by virtue of their union, to endure punishment infinite in degree, and this is equal to infinite in duration. Upon this supposition, he might suffer the whole demerit of sin in a very short time. Those scriptures seem to favour this sentiment, which speak of all our iniquities as being laid upon him — of his not being spared — of his being full of fear and sore amazed — of his sweating blood, and of his crying, when upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Second. Some have contended, that the atonement derives its efficacy, not so much from the quantum of suffering, as from the dignity of the person who suffered; and that since Jesus Christ is God as well as man, his divinity might stamp importance upon the sacrifice of his humanity, and render it commensurate with the demands of divine justice, though he did not suffer all that a world of sinners merited. Upon either of these suppositions the objection is fully answered; but which of them is true, is not revealed; most probably, because it was not necessary to be known. It is sufficient to all the purposes of piety to know, that Christ was substituted in our stead, and hath redeemed us from the curse of

the law, by being made a curse for us; and that, consequently, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. Thus a foundation is laid for the strongest confidence in the believer, the glory of salvation is effectually secured to the Redeemer, and every pious sentiment and emotion is excited which qualifies for the happiness of heaven. This is enough, and it would be unreasonable to require more; divine revelation is not intended to gratify idle curiosity, but to promote piety and virtue.

Some of you are oppressed with a load of guilt, and are inquiring, what must we do to be saved? Those who deny the atonement, ask you if you have committed murder; or, whether some Methodist parson has not been bawling damnation in your ears? They can account for terrors of conscience in no other way. They tell you that many are worse than you are—that you have not much to answer for—and that you have a merciful God to deal with. They bid you go home and say your prayers, do your duty, and dismiss your fears. But you cannot receive this doctrine. You have found out that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God; that prayers do not operate upon God Almighty, as charms are by the vulgar supposed to do on witches; and that though you have the disposition to do your duty, yet you want the power; hence your torment of mind increases. Hearken unto me. You say, your crimes are many and great, and that they have cried long and loudly to heaven for vengeance on your guilty head: you have sinned against the light of the gospel, the strivings of the Spirit, the exhortations of ministers, and the instructions and prayers of parents: you deserve the lowest place in hell, and you fear that you will be doomed to it. All this may be very true, and yet you need not despair. Suppose your sins to be infinite in number, and infinite in magnitude, you must recollect that the precious blood of Christ is infinitely meritorious, and infinitely efficacious. You have no room to doubt the virtue of a sacrifice offered by so divine a person. “Come now

and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." (Isaiah i. 18; 1 Tim. i. 15.)

You dread divine justice—you think it requires your condemnation: but remember that justice has taken its course upon your substitute, so that God can now be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 26.) Make, then, but a humble and sincere confession of sin, and the justice and faithfulness of God, which are so big with terror to the impenitent, will both be engaged in your favour. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)

You perhaps believe in his ability, but you doubt of his willingness to save: you say, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. He will. Could he give greater proof of his gracious disposition towards you, than by laying down his life for you? Consider such invitations and promises as these; they leave no room for despondency. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." "And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth, say, come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." (Matt. xi. 28, 29; Rev. xxii. 17; John vi. 37.)

2. It is necessary our Saviour should be divine, that he may save us from the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world is an enemy to the christian. Many of its customs, maxims, manners, and fashions, are not of the Father. Man is a social being, and there is a principle in his nature, which inclines him to render himself

agreeable to others, as far as possible. He cannot please the world, without conforming to it. Hence its influence over him, and his danger from it. How is this influence to be counteracted, and this danger to be avoided? You say, a man becomes dead to the present world, through the hope of a better hereafter: true; but who, or what inspires that hope? The answer is, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Col. i. 27; Gal. vi. 14.)

The radical corruption of human nature is, in the present day, a very unfashionable doctrine. We are told that man comes into the world without any bias to evil. Let him make his *debut* on the stage of the world as much a saint as you please, it is universally acknowledged that sin soon makes its appearance. It would be beside my present purpose to prove the doctrine of derived depravity; though I think it impossible to account fully for the general degeneracy of mankind which prevails, upon any other principle. Since it is confessed that man is in the pit of moral corruption, the question which we have now to consider is, not whether his father and mother pushed him in, or whether he fell in through his own carelessness, but how he may get out again. Much is said about the ample resources which we possess in our own minds to correct our moral pravity. Most people, however, satisfy themselves with mere assertions of this nature. I say, try; set old nature to work; serve her as a West India planter serves his slaves; flog her, and make her do her utmost; what will be the result? You will only extort this mortifying confession, "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. I delight in the law of God, after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." (Rom. vii. 19—23.)

It is no uncommon case for a man to over-rate his own abilities. Many things are very easy to the sight, which are difficult in the execution. This deception prevails in morals to a very alarming extent. You are, many of you, like the son in the gospel, who made a boast of what he would do, and did nothing. You talk about virtue, and yet remain the vassals of vice. Ask a man who has tried his strength, why do you go on swearing in that horrible manner? He will answer you, "I have got a habit of it—I cannot leave it off—I scarcely know when I do swear—oaths slip out involuntarily, when I am in a passion—my provocations would make a parson swear." Inquire of another about drunkenness, why do you make a beast of yourself? Do you not know that you are ruining your family, your constitution, your soul? "Yes," says the sot, "I know all this very well, and I have often resolved about leaving it off; but when I have been going past a public house, or when my old companions have invited me to one, I have had no power to resist the temptation." He speaks the truth. Vicious appetites, after long indulgence, become as craving as those which are natural, and they are equally as difficult to subdue.

I have been saying all this, not to persuade you that to commit iniquity with greediness is necessary, and salvation impossible; but to induce you to look out for one who is mighty to save, and strong to deliver. Do you exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I answer with the apostle, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vii. 24, 25.) He spoke his own experience as a christian, when he said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

According to the scriptures of the New Testament, the prince of the power of the air worketh in the children of disobedience. (Ephes. ii. 2.) They cannot deliver themselves out of his hands. They are taken captive by the devil at his will. (2 Tim. ii. 26.) The complete dominion of devils over wicked men, cannot

well be expressed in stronger terms. But Jesus Christ can deliver. Read Luke xi. 14—23. Our Lord had cast a devil out of a man. The pharisees said, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils." One part of his answer to this blasphemous assertion was, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." He that is not with me, is against me : and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." From the whole passage we learn, among other things, that satan is the strong man armed ; his palace is the sinner's heart, and he keeps possession of it till a stronger than he, Jesus Christ, dispossesses him.

Thus have I shown that Christ, and none but Christ, delivers from the world, the flesh, and the devil. But it would be impossible for him to do this, if he were not the omnipresent and the almighty Jehovah ; for such a salvation requires his presence at all times, with all the saints, and the exertion of an omnipotent arm.

You are perpetually complaining of your enemies. Keep it in mind that you have a divine Saviour, and you will be courageous. Jesus governs the world : he will give you the victory both over men and things. Your hearts, you say, are unmanageable, — deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; you almost despair of their being made better. But remember, God is greater than your hearts ; he can destroy the strongest corruptions of human nature. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." (Acts xvi. 31 ; Heb. vii. 25.) Satan is a strong man armed ; the prince of this world, yea, the god of this world : never mind that. The devils were subject to Christ when he was in this world ; and when he went into the other, he led them captive, and made a show of them openly. Keep close

to your divine Captain, and encounter them manfully. The conflict may be severe, but the issue is not doubtful: they shall flee before you, or fall under you. (James iv. 7; Rom. xvi. 20.)

3. It is necessary Christ should be the omnipresent God that he may attend to the devotions of his saints. The apostle Paul thus inscribes his first epistle to the Corinthians: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." (Ver. 2, 3.) This is a very encouraging passage. As God, the Lord Jesus hears and answers the prayers of all, in every place; they call upon his name, they receive from him both grace and peace. If he were a creature, he might be like Baal, either talking, or pursuing, or on a journey, or sleeping; and it would be very foolish, as well as very wicked, to pray to him. The papists pray to many creatures, not to give them grace and peace, but to intercede with God for them. Suppose ten thousand people, in different countries, praying to Mary, at the same time, how can she attend to all of them at once? I know that Jesus is a God at hand, and not afar off; but where is Mary?

4. It is necessary Jesus Christ should be divine, that he may be properly qualified to judge the world. "The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son." (John v. 22.) No creature can exercise this office; for it requires not only a knowledge of the whole of the conduct of the whole human race, but also a knowledge of their hearts. At the general judgment our destinies will be determined according to our characters; and in forming an estimate of these, our principles, tempers, and motives, must be taken into the account, as well as our actions. "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Eccles. xiii. 14.)

This doctrine speaks to you, sinners. How much mischief have you conceived in your hearts, which never saw the light? How often have you pleaded a good principle as an excuse for a wicked action, when your hearts have been as bad as your deeds, and even worse? How frequently has it been the case, that your good works have sprung from the worst of motives? Jesus Christ will put all these things to rights. Repent and pray to him to cleanse the thoughts of your hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.

This doctrine speaks to you, believers. Your principles are better than your practices. Your aim is to glorify God in all things; but you sometimes fail through error of judgment. Wicked people brand you for this as hypocrites—they set up a shout, “Now where is your religion?” They know not how to show mercy. What they condemn, your Judge will excuse. David was disposed to build God a temple. His heavenly Master approved of the principle: “Thou didst well in that it was in thine heart:” but he saw it best to defer the work till the next reign. See that your heart be right with God, and then all will be well.

But it is also necessary that the Redeemer of man should partake of human nature.

1. To make atonement for sin. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” (Heb. ix. 22.) The divine nature could not suffer; and the assumption of any other nature than the human, would have been improper. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins

of the people." (Heb. ii. 14—17.) "Thus by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. xv. 21.)

2. To sympathise with his people. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." (Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15.) How consolatory is this! In all your times of trouble, come unto the Saviour. His heart is full of tenderness. He will enter into all your feelings. You frequently complain of the insensibility of your earthly friends; and even when their hearts are touched, their hands are often tied; but Jesus melts with pity, and he will give relief.

3. To intercede for his people. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 25.) This includes in it an act of worship, and, therefore, is only proper to an inferior nature. Consider the closeness of the union betwixt the divine nature and the human, and you cannot doubt about the prevalence of the Saviour's prayers. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. iv. 16.)

4. To set us a perfect example. You say there is some defect in every man's character, and you urge this as an excuse for the imperfections in your own. You do not, I hope, include Jesus Christ in this general statement. "He hath left us an example that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Peter ii. 21, 22.) He carried the practice of every virtue to its highest possible state of perfection. Instead, therefore, of looking at the failings of others, emulate the virtues of your Lord. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked. (Phil. ii. 5; 1 John ii. 6.)

SERMON III.

“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (Acts ii. 47.)

“WHEN the day of pentecost was fully come,” the apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, and fully qualified for the work to which they were called; and they immediately entered on their important labours. Through the plenitude of heavenly influence which accompanied their ministry, three thousand were that day converted to God. Under the greatest alarm and terror of conscience, occasioned by what they heard, these persons eagerly inquired of Peter and of the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter’s answer to this question will shed much light upon our text. “Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation.” (Verses 38—40.) Here they were especially enjoined two things, to repent and to be baptized. Though we have not the “many other words” of the apostle’s lengthened address, yet we have the substance of them comprised in his saying, “Save yourselves,” etc. Repentance is the turning of the heart from sin and satan, to holiness and God. Baptism is the rite of initiation into the church of Christ. To save ourselves from a depraved generation is to separate ourselves from it; and this includes repentance; for until we become troubled in conscience on account of our sins, and have resolved to forsake them, we shall feel no disposition to renounce the fellowship of sinners. The auditors of the apostle, however were smarting under a most painful sense of guilt, which is indicated by their being “pricked in their heart;” and it was this which made them willing and anxious to forsake their sinful pursuits and associates.

Salvation from a wicked world leads directly to

church fellowship. Man is a social being ; and he will seek the society of those whose dispositions are most congenial with his own. Hence, those who under the workings of repentance come out from the ungodly, will esteem it a high privilege to enjoy the communion of saints. So it was in the instance under consideration ; for we read, “ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized ; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Verses 41, 42.) They manifested the reality of their repentance by being baptized for the remission of sins, and by devoting themselves to a new course of life ; and they manifested their separation from the wicked by continuing steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, and other church ordinances. Being by baptism initiated into the church, and receiving the rite for the remission of sins, in the church they would learn the apostles’ doctrine, how God had set forth Christ “ a propitiation through faith in his blood.” Being baptized also, that they might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ; in the church they would receive that invaluable blessing.

With these introductory remarks we are prepared to discuss our text. Most critics render the latter part of it, “ Such as were saved.” The word saved, here has the same meaning as in verse 40, where the sincere inquirers were exhorted to save themselves from that untoward generation ; and which I have shown imports a salvation from the practice of sin, and from the fellowship of sinners. Those who were thus saved, the Lord added to the church. Here we perceive the importance of christian communion. If those were added to the church, who had abandoned their vicious courses, and their vicious companions ; it necessarily follows that those who were not added to the church, were not saved from sin and the world ; and those who are not thus saved in this life, cannot be saved in the life to come.

If the authorised version be preferred, it will lead to the same conclusion ; so that in reference to the doctrine I deduce from the text, it is a matter of no importance which reading is adopted. Take it in the future, "Such as should be saved ;" then, if the word saved be supposed to mean, as it often does in the New Testament, a salvation from the guilt and power of sin ; it will follow, that none should be saved from the guilt and power of sin, but such as were added to the church ; and, in this case, none could be admitted into heaven, but such as had previously belonged to the communion of saints. If the word saved, refer directly to the consummation of bliss in the heavenly state, then those who attain to it must be added to the church militant before they can take their station in the church triumphant. Any of the interpretations, therefore, of which the text seems to be susceptible, will lead to the same result, that none but members of the church on earth can inherit the kingdom of heaven. I, however, prefer the first interpretation, not only because it is more literal, but because it supplies the reason why these converts joined the church. They were saved from their sinful ways and companions, under the operation of the spirit of bondage to fear, and would, therefore, feel anxious to secure the favour and glory of God ; and as they could nowhere else find such helps to the attainment of their wishes and prayers as in the church, they would be prepared and disposed, by religious feeling and principle, to unite with the people of God.

Verse 41 will serve to illustrate and confirm the doctrine of the text : "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized ; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." The pronoun *them* in this passage refers to the apostles, and the one hundred and twenty disciples, mentioned in the preceding chapter, who were the members of the Jerusalem church. Being added to them, therefore, means precisely the same as being added to the church, as it is expressed in our text. But if those who gladly received the word were added to the church, then those who

were not added to the church, did not gladly receive the word; and those who do not gladly receive the word, cannot be saved. This feeling, therefore, of hostility to the word, which kept them out of the church, would keep them out of heaven.

There is scarcely a popish error but what has sprung from some important gospel verity. The Romish priests never utter a greater truth than when they say, "There is no salvation out of the church;" and they cannot tell a greater lie, than when they affirm, there is no salvation out of their church. As regards the church of Rome, it would be more difficult to show that salvation is attainable in it, than that there is no salvation out of it. But I think I have already proved, that those who would unite with saints in glory, must not stand aloof from them in this season of their humiliation.

You will, perhaps, admit what I contend for, if the necessity of membership be applied to the invisible, and not the visible church. I am aware that some divines make this distinction, and suppose that many may belong to the invisible church who do not belong to the visible, and *vice versa*. But I could never find this invisible church; perhaps because it is invisible. I read nothing concerning the invisible church on earth in the New Testament; and I am quite sure that the church referred to in the text was a visible one; for it is said that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Ver. 42.) These certainly were visible church acts. Our Saviour characterised his church thus: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. v. 14 — 16.) The invisible church is a hidden church; but Christ's church we read, cannot be hid. The members of Christ's church are to illuminate the

world ; which would be impossible if they were like a light hidden under a bushel. It is enjoined upon the church, to make such an exhibition of christianity before men, as shall constrain them to glorify God ; but how can this be done if they keep their religion to themselves ? That the church is visible, is evident from the word itself, *ecclesia*, which denotes, an assembly of people ; and in its ecclesiastical sense, " A congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered." Such was the church at Jerusalem.

According to the text, " The Lord added " the people " to the church." And how did he do this ?

(1.) By inclining their minds to enter into it, as a privilege. In giving them repentance unto life, he set their hearts against all sin, and made the company of sinners painful to them, on account of their depraved discourse and actions ; and this feeling would dispose them to come out of the world. But when the conscience is under alarm at the sight of the consequences of transgression, which is the case with every true penitent, there will be anxious inquiries after salvation ; and the awakened sinner will instinctively seek the society of saints, to direct and assist him in the prosecution of his great design. A person who sets out on a journey to a distant place without knowing the road, will be glad to have the company of those who are acquainted with it ; and when he has learned the way, he will continue with his guides, because their society will be both more safe and pleasant than it would be to walk in this path, that is beset with dangers, in solitude. It is true that those who renounce the world, and unite with the people of God, will have to suffer persecution ; for the wicked will feel it as a reflection upon them, that you should desert their society under the pretence of saving your soul ; because this would imply that you could not be saved in their company, which implication, if admitted, would make their consciences very uneasy ; they will, therefore, feel indignant at you as a narrow-minded bigot, and will cast out your name as

evil. If the fear of persecution deter you from following the bias of your mind in associating with the virtuous, God will add you to the church.

(2.) By impressing its fellowship upon your heart as a duty. Those who put the question on the day of pentecost, "What shall we do?" were exhorted to save themselves from that untoward generation; and the exhortation was grounded upon the duty just before laid down, to repent, and, by baptism, to enter into the church, as the only means of obtaining the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. In 2 Corinthians, vi. 17, 18, the condition on which God has promised to receive us graciously is, that we abandon our ungodly associates: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty." How vain, therefore, must be our expectation of enjoying the favour of God while we maintain communion with the sons of Belial!

(3.) The Lord adds to the church actually, by means of his ministers. Baptism is the rite of initiation into the christian church, just as circumcision was into the Jewish church. In the case of those who were united to the faithful on the day of pentecost, the only introductory act we read of was baptism. The same observation will apply to every other instance recorded in the New Testament. The unbaptized are never recognised as members of the christian community, and the baptized are uniformly acknowledged as belonging to it. I need not dwell longer upon this subject, because it is generally admitted that baptism is the rite of initiation into the church. The disputed point is, whether this rite admits into the universal church only, or also into the particular church of the administrator. If creeds and usages did not stand in the way, this question would be easily answered. An acknowledged member of the universal church must have a right to communion in a particular church, because he is entitled to the pastoral attentions of the minister who

admitted him, and to the ordinances of the Lord's house, and to the fellowship of saints. To deny this, would be as absurd as to contend that a man who is a legal and good British subject, has no right to reside in any part of the British dominions, and no legal claim to the protection and privileges of British law.

The reason why baptism, though it is granted to be the door of entrance into the universal church, is denied to give any right of admission into a particular church is, the claim of its members to have a vote on the fitness of candidates for communion. If the right to communion with the church of the administrator flows from the ordinance, then it follows, that the minister who gives the ordinance has the power of admitting into his church without being obliged to consult the members. To give a colour of consistency to the assumed interference of the church in the election of its members, the above distinction has been invented. That the minister's right to baptize is derived from Christ, and not from the people, is granted on all hands. Indeed, what can be plainer than the terms of the commission, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing," etc. On the ground of this commission, ministers had uniformly added to the churches to which they belonged, by the divinely appointed rite, till the rise of independency. Not a solitary text can be adduced from the sacred writings to show that the people had any authority upon this subject.

This new state of things may lead to the greatest absurdities. Suppose a person rejected by the church whose minister gave him the ordinance, and then inform me what are the privileges which he enjoys as a member of the universal church? Christ has enjoined upon his ministers, in reference to those they have baptized, to "teach them to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded." (Matt. xxviii. 20.) The minister has, by the ordinance, established the pastoral relation between himself and the subject; he must, therefore, press upon the disciple the observance of all the precepts of Christ. One of these precepts is, to receive

the Lord's supper. How is he to observe this when the church hath rejected him? Another is, to dwell in unity and love with his christian brethren. How can he possibly do this, so long as they refuse communion with him? Thus the commission and precepts of Christ are made void by the assumption of private members.

"But the people think," you say, "that under their superintendence the church will be better governed." No doubt they do. It is one of the results of "the march of intellect," that disciples are to instruct their teachers, and subjects govern their rulers. But common minds did not take these gigantic strides in the days of the apostles. The three thousand on the day of pentecost could not, besides being baptized by the apostles, have their characters scrutinized by the church, before they were added to it; for as both were done the same day, there was not time for it. I think the baptizing of three thousand was a pretty good day's work. But to suppose that, in addition to this, the church examined each candidate separately as to his experience and moral character, is one of the greatest absurdities that can well be conceived.

Admitting that baptism is the rite of initiation into the church, some have doubted whether all ministers have a commission to baptize, because St. Paul says, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." (1 Cor. i. 17.) The Corinthians were divided into parties, one saying, "I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos," etc. This he warmly reprehends, and asks, "Was Paul crucified for you; or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" He adds, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanus: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." From which it is manifest, that the apostle apprehended a great abuse might arise from the circumstance of his administration of the rite; and this led him to thank God that he had personally given the

ordinance to very few at Corinth. And it was no doubt in this sense that Christ did not send him to baptize, that is, he did not require him to perform the rite himself; for, supposing his commission to have been the same as the other apostles received, it did not imply that they should personally perform the office, but only that they should direct its administration. Thus, though Peter was sent under the commission recorded, (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20,) yet he did not in all cases give the ordinance himself; for when Cornelius and his family and friends were converted under his ministry, instead of his baptizing them, "He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts x. 48.) In John iv. 1, 2, we read, "When, therefore, the Lord knew how the pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples," etc. This passage shows, that though the authority to give the rite was in Jesus, yet he did not personally administer it, but deputed the disciples to do the work. St. Paul had authority to baptize, or he would not have given the ordinance to Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanus, at Corinth; nor to the jailor and his family at Philippi, etc. But as we have seen above that this was a duty which might be delegated to others, the Lord did not require St. Paul to perform it personally; and in the circumstances of the Corinthian church, he thanked God that he had done it only in a few instances. The passage, therefore, does not imply the non-importance of baptism, as some have supposed, or that it may be performed independent of the ministry, but merely that the minister is not required to give the rite himself; it is enough if he see that it be done. In Acts xviii. we have an account of the apostle's first visit to Corinth, and that "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Aquila, Silas, and Timothy, were at Corinth at the time; and it is probable that these ministers gave the ordinance under the direction of the apostle.

Many who enter christian societies in the present day, do not need the ordinance at the time, as they received it in their infancy ; but the right to induct them is not, in consequence of this circumstance, transferred to other hands. In apostolic times, christians were often moving from church to church. Thus, "When Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples ; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him ; and how he had preached boldly at Damascus, in the name of the Lord Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem." (Acts ix. 26—28.) In this case Saul was admitted into the church at Jerusalem, not by the people, for they were for rejecting him ; but in consequence of a notification in his favour from the evangelist Barnabas, to the apostles, and not to the people. In cases of this sort, therefore, as well as by baptism, the Lord adds to his church by means of his ministers.

The modern notion, that we may be saved at last just as well out of a church, as in one, is as dangerous as it is novel. I cannot trace it back much beyond a century ; and I am quite sure it has nothing to support it in the Bible. If you can get to heaven without passing through the church on earth, I hope you will not deny me the same privilege ; and then the church is one of the most useless institutions ever set up. The obligation to membership, where it may be had, must be binding on all christians, or on none. Suppose, then, every christian to withdraw from the church, and the church will immediately be extinct. But if the church were extinct, christianity would soon be extinct too : for the christian religion is not like a mere system of philosophy, which we may learn from a book and adopt as our own, without cultivating any acquaintance with others of the same sect : it contains important institutions, and requires many public and associated acts of its professors. A man cannot be a

christian who has never received either baptism, or the Lord's supper, or attended a place of christian worship.

That the dissolution of the church involves in it the destruction of christianity, the following considerations will make manifest. If there were no church, there could be no ministry; for all ministers have sprung from churches. Ministers without churches could not perform the duties of their office. They could not give the sacraments, because these are both church ordinances; baptism being the rite of initiation into the church, and the Lord's supper being an act of communion among its members. Many of you are mere outward hearers; and you conceive that a minister might be found who would not object to preach to a whole congregation of outward hearers. But where would you find him? In the state of things contemplated, you must recollect there is no church; you must seek for him, therefore, among the wicked of the world. That is an admirable school of preparation for the high vocation of an ambassador of Christ! Well, when you have engaged a man of the world to preach to you, without exercising any discipline, or administering the sacraments, he would be a pretty sort of a pastor, would he not? and be likely to do your souls a great deal of good? But where must he preach? Not, I presume, in the open air all the year round. You must build him a chapel; you must engage a person to light and clean and have the care of it; you must keep it in repair; you must pay your preacher a salary. Can all this be done without association and christian communion? And when all is ready, what doctrine is to be preached? Can this be settled without christian communion also? You may, perhaps, form a scheme in your minds, of having a minister without a church; but on trial, so many difficulties will arise, as to render the thing impracticable. The experience of eighteen centuries has not furnished an instance of such a plan being carried into effect. No body of men would go this length without wishing to

go farther; and though you see no natural impossibilities in the way of realizing the megrim, yet the moral difficulties may safely be pronounced to be insuperable. And can you seriously think that that way will terminate in heaven, which leads to the annihilation of christianity on earth? But if the new project were practicable, yet this sort of christianity, without either church or sacraments, would be good for nothing.

In opposition to all I have said, you would remind me, that nearly all sects are agreed that nothing more is necessary to salvation than repentance, faith, and holiness; you contend that these may be experienced without church fellowship; and you infer that communion is not necessary. That those who repent of their sins, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and lead holy lives, will be finally saved, I readily grant. The only question is, whether all this can be done by persons who refuse the communion of all the churches of Christ. I say, refuse; for where communion cannot be had, all obligation to it is at an end; and salvation may, no doubt, in such a case, be obtained without it. But this is not your case. The churches of Christ abound in your vicinity, and are open to those who wish in good earnest to save their souls. Now let us try that repentance, faith, and holiness, which a man may experience, while in his heart he prefers the fellowship of sinners to that of saints.

1. Repentance. The first thing enjoined upon those who, on the day of pentecost, were pricked in their hearts, was to repent. And we have seen how repentance operated upon them; it induced them, without delaying for a day, to save themselves from the world, and unite themselves to the church of God. And why do multitudes in these times discover so much dread of a christian church, that though they live for years near the door of it, they can never be persuaded to enter in? I know of no other answer that can be given, but that their love of sin causes them to prefer the society of the depraved to that of the just; or, in a word, that they will not repent. In Matthew xxi.

28—32, we have a parable in which the kingdom of God is compared to a vineyard; and the proprietor of this vineyard is represented as ordering his two sons to go and work in it. One promised, but did not perform; the other refused, “But afterward he repented and went.” It is generally admitted, that by the kingdom or vineyard, in this parable, is intended the church. Here then is a command of God to enter into his church; and here is an example of a person as soon as he has repented, complying with the precept. No one would have believed that the first son repented, if it had not been added that he “went;” and your repentance amounts to nothing, if it do not move you to enter into God’s church, and to work for him.

2. Faith. You believe in the holy, universal church, but in no particular church; although the universal is made up of particulars. You believe in the communion of saints; but you prefer to that the communion of sinners. You believe in the person of Christ for salvation; and you reject the church to which he adds daily those that are saved. You also reject his doctrine which denounces those as factious and incorrigible who refuse to submit to the discipline established in the household of the faithful. “If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” (Matt. xviii. 17.) You believe a few lines of the Bible, and think that sufficient; and so take the liberty to trample all the rest under foot. Give me an instance from the New Testament, if you can, of a person being called a believer, who refused communion with the church of Christ. Your faith is presumption.

3. Holiness. You are very holy, no doubt; but it looks a little suspicious that you decline the society of holy persons, and prefer the fellowship of sinners. Pray how did you attain to holiness? You are very orthodox, I presume, and can talk at a wonderful rate respecting the sanctification of the Spirit, as well as the “belief of the truth.” But have you ever experienced the truth of this verse: “By one Spirit are we bap-

tized into one body ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit ?” If you had received this Spirit, he would have baptized you into the body of the faithful. You think you can be holy enough without being dependent on the church ; the apostle, however, was of another mind. In representing the communion of saints, and their dependence one upon another, under the figure of a human body, in which the members are united ; he remarks, “ God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. Now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee : nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.” (1 Cor. xii. 18 — 21.) But God hath not, it seems, set you in the body ; and you can, on account of your superior holiness, say to all the members of it, “ I have no need of you.” The Holy Spirit works holiness in the hearts of christians in their use of the means of grace ; and among the chief of these means are the ordinances of the church ; such as the Lord’s supper, meetings for prayer and conversation on christian experience, for mutual instruction, reproof, correction, warning, comfort, and all the exercises of discipline. Of these helps you voluntarily deprive yourselves ; and you have great cause for fear that your boasted holiness, which gives you no relish for the companionship of the just below, will give you no meetness to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. As every man, however, endeavours to reconcile his conscience to his conduct, in order to keep all quiet within, we must examine the pleas you urge for standing aloof from the righteous.

1. You pretend that the church is not good enough. Some of its members do not live up to their profession ; but with all the noise they make about religion, they are very loose in their morals. You tell us how you hate hypocrisy, and affirm that if you were to join with us, you would act a consistent part.

The objection contains two causes of regret. The first is, that there should be such defective characters

in the church. Our Saviour has, however, assured us that some tares will grow up with the wheat, and that the zeal which would eradicate them all, would be more mischievous than beneficial; since, with the tares, it would root up the wheat also: both, he declares, must grow together until harvest. The gospel net encloses a great multitude of different kinds of fish, and must be drawn to the shores of eternity before the final separation be made, when the good will be gathered into vessels, and the bad be cast away. In the present state of things, however desirable it may be to find a perfect church, it is impossible; we must, therefore, be content to associate with some who are hypocrites, and with others who have much of weakness and infirmity, if we will enjoy the fellowship of those whose piety and integrity are above suspicion. The hypocrites may serve as a beacon to warn us against unfaithfulness; the weak will furnish exercise for our patience and charity, in bearing with and hiding their failings; and the perfect will, it is to be hoped, rouse our zeal to emulate their virtues. With all its defects, however, the church is superior to the world in supplying examples of holiness, and the means of attaining it; and if we cannot find a church exactly so pure as we might wish, yet we cannot be sincere if we do not unite with the most holy society to which we have access. Now you boggle at the church because it is not quite perfect, and in the mean time you continue in the fellowship of the world. What are you doing there? Is the world made up of saints? What aids to holiness do you derive from it? When you meet together, is it to pray to God, to sing the praises of the Redeemer, and to converse respecting the work of the Holy Spirit on your hearts? Do you blush? and well you may! If you had a spark of religion, you would come out from among them, and be thankful for the many and great helps which the church of Christ, with all its imperfections, can and would most gladly afford you. You profess to be religious; and your religion seems to consist in little else than vilifying the character of pious people, as though it

would be a reproach to you to abandon such as make no profession, for the sake of enjoying their society.

The other cause of regret is, that so shining a christian as you would make, according to your own account, if you were but among us, should deny us the benefit of your fellowship and example. You would live up to your profession. In your character there would be neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. You would be a perfect christian. Why, you are just the man we need! You would make us all ashamed of ourselves! Such a prodigy of piety would soon work miracles among us, and rouse the most sluggish to imitate such resplendent virtue. And as to hypocrites, — the most impudent among them would not have face enough to look upon such a paragon of purity, but would flee from his presence, as the Israelites did from Moses, when he came down from the holy mount, irradiated with divine glory! O thou detestable hypocrite! to prate against God's children, and undertake to hector them for coming short of perfection, when thou, thyself, art in league with the world, and canst not be persuaded to leave it; art walking according to the course of this world, according to "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience;" art seldom on thy knees in thy closet, and, perhaps, never worshipping with thy family; art, through the malignity of thy disposition, blazing abroad the infirmities of the pious, and magnifying them by thy wicked invention, when a spark of heavenly charity would have prompted thee to hide them; and art all the while affecting to be too holy for the society of those who are generally, to say the least, endeavouring to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling."

2. Another objection is, some member of the church has offended you, and you will not unite with it while he remains in it. But if church fellowship be a duty, as I think I have demonstrated, then this can be no excuse for declining it. Are the resentments of christians to be implacable? Is this a reason why you

should deprive yourself of all the advantages of the church, that one of its members has done you an injury? Am I to avoid the direct way to heaven because I see a stumbling block in it? I must travel that road; and if I cannot remove the stumbling block, I will climb over it. "He that will forgive nothing," our Saviour has taught us, "shall have nothing forgiven."

3. When other objections are answered, we are met with a most perplexing doubt, which is proposed with the utmost gravity. You assure us that you think the communion of saints a very good thing, which you would be glad to enjoy; but the multiplicity of sects into which the christian world is divided, each pretending to be a true church of Christ, must make it a matter of extreme difficulty, amidst these numerous and rival claims, to determine which denomination is best entitled to our fellowship.

You have already, I presume, settled this important question. Why do you attend our ministry? As you affect to be both honest and intelligent, I must suppose you do this, because, after careful inquiry, you are persuaded we are ministers of Christ, and preach his glorious gospel more fully than others do; and if this be your judgment, then are you bound in conscience to unite with us. But if you have attended here from the prejudices of education, custom, fashion, or convenience, and not as the result of calm and holy deliberation, yet I think you may soon and safely settle this knotty question. Though there be a variety of sects, yet you will find on examination that nearly all of them hold in common the great vital principles of our holy religion; and those in every sect who live and die under their influence, will, without doubt, be saved everlastingly. The points about which they differ have their different degrees of importance, and therefore it is not a matter of indifference to which society you attach yourselves; yet, allow me to suggest, that in almost any church you will find greater helps, and stand a better chance of final salvation, than you can do in your present state of alienation from the faithful,

and connexion with the wicked. If you have received any spiritual good, under our ministry, you ought to try whether a closer communion with us would not be productive of still greater advantages. If you think you are in a safe state already, (though I greatly doubt this,) then you ought, out of gratitude for the benefits you have received, to join with us hand and heart, that you may share with us in all the privileges of the church, and lend us your assistance in spreading vital religion through the earth. It has a very beggarly appearance to come to our door for the bread of life, but refuse, when you are invited, to enter in and become one of the family. But if you say, you wish to get good to your souls under our ministry, and cannot; I have only to answer, go, and try somewhere else.

4. Most objectors, however, are ashamed to speak the truth, as to why they do not unite with any christian community. The above objections, in general, are mere pretences; the fact is, these gentlemen on the outside, do not like to be subjected to the discipline of the church of Christ. They are living in some known sin; they know, if they were members of a church, they would be called to account for it; they are resolved not to give it up; they therefore keep at a respectful distance, and if a zealous person gives any of them a gentle reproof, the answer is ready: "You have no business to interfere with me; I am not of your society; I have a right to do as I please, without being accountable to you." And it will be found in this, as in most other instances, that the same reasons which keep men out of the church will keep them out of heaven.

5. There is at least, however, one exception to the above observation, and that is in the case of those who object to enter into the church on account of their unfitness for it. They have such a painful sense of their sinfulness, as makes them blush at the thought of being united to the excellent ones of the earth; and till their character be very much improved, they conceive that any advances they might make towards the church would appear very presumptuous. And yet they can

never stand in greater need of christian fellowship than now, when, without experience, struggling under the oppression of guilt and depravity, and conflicting with the world and satan, they are in danger of sinking into despondency. Such need encouragement. You feel your need of that information and assistance which the church can afford, but you are afraid to apply to it. The church opens her doors to you, and invites you to enter in. The only condition she imposes as a qualification for admittance is, "A desire to flee from the wrath to come." She knows your situation, and sympathizes with you. Under her ordinances you will receive liberty, comfort, and purity. Do not let a voluntary humility deprive you of those privileges which it is the duty and the glory of the church to confer on those who seek her aid. She will be satisfied, though on your admission you be "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," if you will but, in the use of her means, which are always available to sincerity and faith, grow in wisdom, and spirituality, and holiness.

I have already adverted to the advantages of christian fellowship. To enter into them at large would require another sermon. The more important of them may be comprised under the following particulars. Your separation from the world will remove you from a scene of temptation, which none can dare with impunity. The union of christians among themselves causes the reproach of the cross to light upon the whole community, and not on an individual; and, thus divided, each feels his share to be light. As their union is for holy purposes, they will stimulate each other to noble deeds; will watch over each other in love; will bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ; will give mutual instruction, reproof, warning, and consolation; and will be benefited by the ordinances of the church, such as pastoral advice, public prayer, the Lord's supper, etc. And besides all this, their union is necessary to give efficiency to plans for spreading the gospel, in which all real christians must

feel deeply interested, and which the Head of the church has imposed as a sacred duty upon his members. Our Saviour declared that his disciples were not of the world; and instead of their remaining scattered and solitary, he prayed most heartily "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." And again: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John xvii. 21, 23.) It is the visible union of christians one with another, which is here prayed for, because the manifestation of it to the world is intended as the prime means of its conviction and conversion.

Having shown that it is both a duty and a privilege to be united to the church of Christ; and that it is dangerous in the extreme to prefer, under any pretence, the society of the wicked to that of the just; give me leave to press upon the consciences of all who are not in communion with the church, the necessity of immediately making up your minds on this most momentous subject. If, after all, you will not be convinced and persuaded, allow me to remind you, in conclusion, that should you be denied admission into heaven at last, you will have no just cause of complaint. God will only confirm, in the next world, the choice you made in this. You prefer separation from the righteous here; and God will separate you from them hereafter. In this life you have chosen the wicked for your associates, and in the life to come you shall have your portion with them for ever and ever. You cannot, surely, object to this.

A word to church members, and I have done. Do you think that because you are in a christian society, therefore you are safe? "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." Communion is not a substitute for holiness, but a means of producing it. In the use of all the means of grace appointed by the church, see to it that ye secure the end intended by their institu-

tion, which is, your improvement in piety and virtue. It is only thus that the church can be your guide to a blissful immortality. Consider the duties you owe to one another. You are to be fellow helpers in working out your salvation; and in order to this, you must maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. O be careful that you do not hinder one another by unholy tempers, by foolish discourse, or by unbecoming deportment. Manifest that charity and purity which are the distinguishing characteristics of christianity, that you may answer the gracious intentions of God in your association, and become his honoured instruments in bringing the world into the fold of Christ. If you trifle in religion, and become loose in your morals, you will stumble the weak, grieve the strong, and open the mouths of the profane in blasphemies. Cultivate purity in your own souls, and love to the brotherhood; and Christ, who "loved the church, and gave himself for it," will present you to himself at the last day, "A glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

SERMON IV.

"Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." (Matt. xxiii. 13.)

THE pharisees derived their name from the word *pharis*, "to separate," because they separated from others under a pretence of superior sanctity. The period when they were first formed into a sect is unknown; but it appears from Josephus, that they were become a numerous and powerful body in the time of John Hyrcanus, about one hundred and eight years before the Christian era.

They maintained that God gave to Moses, on mount Sinai, a double law; the one written, the other oral:

the latter being, in their opinion, an exposition of the former. They pretended that Moses repeated the oral law to Joshua, that Joshua delivered it to the elders, the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the wise men of the great synagogue, from whom successively it descended to after ages. Judah Haccodhesh committed these traditions to writing about one hundred and fifty years after Christ, and called the book the Mishna, or the Second Law.

It has been generally supposed that the pharisees, though very corrupt in principle, were remarkably moral in practice. But this is a contradiction; a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit: and it is a fact, that their lives were as depraved as their hearts. They did not even teach* a pure morality. The traditions of the elders, which the pharisees strictly attended to, and preached up with uncommon zeal, were subversive of the moral law. "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men. Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Making the word of God of none effect, through your tradition which ye have delivered." Our Lord has given a striking instance of this, upon a subject of the utmost importance. "Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Whosoever curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother." (Mark vii. 1—13.) Dr. Doddridge's paraphrase is a good explanation of this tradition. "But what you teach is contradictory to this divine command; and an ungrateful child may justify himself in the neglect of it, in consequence of your tradition: for you assert [that] any one may say

* The scribes were the preaching clergy among the Jews, and for the most part were of the sect of the pharisees; hence, in the gospels, they are generally associated together.

to his father or mother, [let that be] Corban, that is to say, let it be reckoned as a devoted thing, or be considered as a gift dedicated to the altar, by which thou mightest otherwise receive advantage from me; and he shall then be free from the command, and not be under any obligation to honour and relieve his father and his mother. And in this manner, out of regard to such a rash and impious vow, you not only suppose he may innocently omit this evident duty of natural as well as revealed religion, but will no more permit him to do anything for the relief even of his father or his mother." Dr. Campbell observes, "The words, 'Be it corban,' or devoted, involve an imprecation against himself, if he shall ever bestow anything to relieve the necessities of his parents: as if he should say to them, 'May I incur all the infamy of sacrilege and perjury, if ever ye get a farthing from me;' than which we can hardly conceive anything spoken by a son to his parents more contemptuous, more unnatural, more barbarous, and consequently more justly termed *cacologia*, 'opprobrious language.'" Thus if a youth, in a fit of passion with his parents, vowed, "Whatever of my property might be useful to you, is corban," the pharisees immediately absolved him from all obligation to support them, and from the curse of reviling them; but nothing could release him from the obligation of this tradition; for should he afterwards repent, or should his parents be on the point of perishing through want, they "suffered him no more to do aught for his father or his mother." The treasury, which was the depository of things devoted, was under the management of the chief men among the pharisees; and this explains their strict attention to this tradition. But the worst of it is, this was not a solitary instance of awful corruption in their doctrine; for it is added, "And many such like things do ye."

There is perhaps no part of the word of God, which has been more generally misunderstood, than Matthew xxiii. 2, 3: "The scribes and the pharisees sit in Moses's seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe,

that observe and do ; but do ye not after their works, for they say, and do not." Hence it is inferred, that our Lord acknowledged their authority as teachers, and seriously desired the people to follow their doctrine. Had they taught a pure morality, this interpretation would appear specious ; but we have seen that they preached the traditions of the elders to the subversion of the law ; and instructed children how to curse and abandon their aged parents with impunity, and many such like things. In fact, in immediate connexion with the passage under consideration, our Lord has pointed out several errors in their doctrine, and the pernicious influence of these errors upon the minds and conduct of their followers. 1. They held the mere humanity of the Messiah. (Chap. xxii. 41 — 46.) 2. They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, and would neither go in themselves, nor suffer even those that were entering to go in. (Chap. xxiii. 13.) 3. They made their proselytes twofold more the children of hell than themselves. (Ver. 15.) 4. They instructed the people how to curse and swear with impunity. (Ver. 16 — 22.) 5. They taught that the true ministers of Christ were not fit to live, and accordingly murdered them. (Ver. 34, 35.) Now, could our Lord seriously desire the people to put themselves under the instructions of men who would teach them to disbelieve the doctrine of his Godhead ? who would hinder them from entering the kingdom of heaven, by making them children of hell ? and who would instruct them to curse, swear, and murder ?

The truth of the matter appears to be this : the people had a very high opinion of the pharisees, and cried them up as learned and wise men, who must know the law, and consequently well qualified to teach it. They admitted, indeed, that they were not very pure in their manners, but they had the old apology ready : " We must do as they say, and not as they do." Very well, says our Lord, since you admit the authority of the scribes and pharisees to sit in the chair of Moses, and expound the law, " Whatsoever they bid you observe,

that observe and do ;” the consequence will be, they will “ bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne,” of traditionary rites and ceremonies, “ And lay them upon your shoulders ;” and while you are groaning under the load, instead of extolling them as excellent ministers, you will censure them as hard task-masters, and will know how to prize my ministry, which will set you at liberty from this yoke of bondage. (Matt. xi. 28 — 30.) He then proceeds to expose their hypocrisy, pride, and ignorance, in the strongest colours. Consider our Lord, then, as speaking ironically, and every difficulty vanishes. There is an instance of the most cutting irony addressed to the pharisees, in verse 32, of the same chapter : “ Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.” See also another in Mark vii. 9 : “ Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.” Those, therefore, who lived up to the doctrine of the pharisees, would be essentially defective in point of moral virtue. It is of them and their deluded followers that our Lord observes, “ They be blind, leaders of the blind ; and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” (Matt. xv. 14.)

As the pharisees did not preach morality, so neither did they practise it. Our Lord charged them with having “ omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith ;” or, as Dr. Campbell renders it, “ Justice, humanity, and fidelity.” They must, therefore, have been dishonest, cruel, and treacherous. John the Baptist was startled when they applied to him for baptism, and exclaimed, “ O generation of vipers ! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ?” He insisted upon a reformation of manners : “ Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance,” or, according to the marginal reading, “ Fruits answerable to amendment of life.”

It is singular enough, when such is the scriptural view of the moral system and character of the pharisees, that Christians in general should suppose them to have been strictly virtuous in their lives, and that nothing was wanting to make them truly religious, but a

change in their principles and motives of action. How unjust to call a man, who is punctual to his engagements, honest in his dealings, and kind to the poor, a pharisee. He is nearly as far removed from a pharisee as an angel is from a devil.

But it will be demanded, does not our Lord represent the pharisees as making clean the outside of the cup and platter ? as being like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward ? and as outwardly appearing righteous unto men ? He does ; but the question is, Of what did the white-wash consist ? Not of the practice of moral duties, as has been already shown, but, as will subsequently appear, of some religious rites and ceremonies.

The washing of hands before meat was a tradition of the elders, which the pharisees strictly observed. They severely censured the disciples for omitting this ceremony, (Matt. xv. 2 ; Mark ii. 4,) and considered the performance of it so indispensable, that they maintained, according to Godwin, "That in case a man should come to some water, but not enough both to wash and to drink, he should rather choose to wash than to drink, though he die with thirst." They also held it unlawful to eat with sinners, or even to touch them. (Matt. ix. 11 ; Luke vii. 39.) The bigot, therefore, who is superstitiously tenacious of every trivial rite and ceremony of his own system, and can tolerate the worst of vices in himself and his own sect, who makes his own creed the test of saintship, and stigmatizes all other denominations of christians as sinners, is a pharisee.

The pharisees pretended to fast twice a week, (Luke xviii. 12,) on Mondays and Thursdays ; assigning as a reason for it, that Moses ascended mount Sinai on a Thursday, and came down on a Monday. Though they put on a sad and sullen countenance, on those days, to deceive the multitude, and inspire an exalted idea of their piety, yet it is very doubtful whether they really fasted at all. (Matt. vi. 16.) And when you observe a professor, of loose morals, who looks dull

and sour, under a pretence of gravity and seriousness, and who condemns the smile of cheerfulness as unchristian levity, you see a pharisee.

They prayed long and often ; but they loved to do it standing, and in public places, such as the synagogues and the corners of the streets, that they might acquire a reputation for sanctity, and gain public confidence, which they knew how to turn to their own advantage. They devoured widows' houses, and, for a pretence, made long prayers. (Matt. xxiii. 14.) Their practice appears to have been this: when they heard of a widow who was left with some little property, they marked her out for their prey : they visited her, consoled with her on the loss of her husband, offered to assist her in settling her affairs, and, to remove all suspicion, made a long prayer. By these arts they imposed upon her credulity, obtained her money, took possession of her house, and turned her out of doors. A man who constantly goes to religious assemblies, prays long, and loud, and often, but gets into all the debt he can, and never pays again, is a pharisee ; for he prays to be seen of men, that he may be thought to be religious, and thus, under cover of the good opinion he inspires, facilitates the execution of his schemes of iniquity.

They gave alms. But their charities were all of a public nature, performed in the synagogues and in the streets. The sounding of a trumpet before them, is a proverbial expression, to denote noise and ostentation. Their object, in all this, was to enjoy the praise of men. But when we read that they were destitute of humanity, (Matt. xxiii. 23,) that they were covetous, (Luke xvi. 14,) and that they devoured widows' houses, (Matt. xxiii. 14,) we may be certain that what they gave publicly, was only intended to keep up their reputation, and enable them to carry on their nefarious practices with the greater ease ; and that their charities were as seldom performed, and as small in quantity, as would possibly serve to promote the objects they had in view. A hard-hearted, covetous man will cheer-

fully give away a shilling, when it affords him facilities of gaining a pound. Whenever you see a great professor, who gives to public charities, but sends the private sufferer empty away; who grinds the faces of the poor, and robs the widow of her habitation, you may be certain you see a pharisee.

They paid tithe of anise, mint, and cummin, and omitted the duties of justice, humanity, and fidelity. (Matt. xxiii. 23.) It follows, that those who acquire wealth by their immoral practices, and who devote a small part of their ill-gotten gain to the support of ministers and religious institutions, under an idea of sanctifying the remainder, are pharisees.

They made broad their phylacteries. "The phylacteries," says Dr. Jennings, "are little scrolls of parchment, in which are written certain sentences of the law, inclosed in leather cases, and bound with thongs on the forehead and on the left arm." Godwin supposes they wrote at length on these parchments the four following sections of the law: 1. Exod. xiii. 2—10; 2. Exod. xiii. 11—16; 3. Deut. vi. 4—9; 4. Deut. xi. 13—21. They understood, literally, the command respecting the words of the law, "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." From ostentation, the pharisees made the hand phylactery so broad, that it reached above the elbow, pretending by this an extraordinary reverence for the law. The Greek word, *phylacterion*, signifies a spell, and these parchments were thus called, because the superstitious pharisees supposed that, like amulets, spells, and charms, they would preserve them from dangers. Hence, those persons who lead wicked lives, and have a superstitious reverence for the scriptures; who transcribe a few verses from the Bible, and wear them about their necks as charms, to preserve them from witches, and cure them from agues, are pharisees.

They enlarged the borders of their garments. The Jews were commanded to "make them fringes in the borders of their garments." (Num. xv. 38, 39.) The

use of this fringe was, "That they might look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them." This fringe was to be set upon the four corners of the upper garment, (see Deut. xxii. 12,) which was made of a square piece of cloth. As to the form of this fringe, the Hebrew word in the former text is *tsitsith*, "a flower;" and in the latter, *gedilim*, which denotes the form of the flower; for its import is cones, or conical clusters, increasing in size from the apex, or point. This fringe, therefore, was nothing else but a conical flower appended to the strings with which they tied on the upper garment, and which, in modern phrase, may be rendered, a tassel, or tuft. This is the import of the Greek word *craspedon*, which, in Matt. xxiii. 5, is improperly rendered border, and in Matt. ix. 20, and xiv. 36, hem. In all these places Dr. Campbell has rendered the word, tuft. It was these tufts or tassels of their garments, which the pharisees wore uncommonly large, under a pretence of superior regard to the law. Godwin observes, that they put sharp thorns into these tassels, that by their frequent pricking, they might be reminded of the commandment.

These tassels were worn by the Jews generally, and even by our Saviour; and it appears that the common people had adopted the superstitious notion, that some peculiar holiness, or virtue, resided in them; for the woman, who was diseased with the issue of blood, touched the hem (or a tassel) of our Lord's garment, in expectation of a cure; and with the same view, the inhabitants of Gennesaret brought their diseased friends to him, "And besought him that they might only touch the hem (or a tassel) of his garment."

"Some conceive," says Dr. Jennings, "the fringe (or tassel) was to be a distinguishing badge, which God ordered his people of Israel to wear on their clothes, in the nature of a livery, that they might be known for his servants, who was not ashamed to own them for his peculiar people; as he had before, for the same purpose, ordered them to wear a distinguishing

mark in their flesh, namely, circumcision. This account well agrees with the reason given for their wearing it, "That they might look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord to do them:" that is, that it might remind them that, as the servants of Jehovah, whose livery they wore, they were bound to do all that he had commanded them. And as by this badge they were to be distinguished from the servants of all other gods, so it was to be a guard upon them from idolatry; accordingly it follows: "That ye seek not after your own hearts, and your own eyes, after which ye used to go a whoring." Those, then, who pay extraordinary respect to the word of God in their dress, but neglect it in their lives; who are more concerned about the shape and colour of a bonnet, gown, or coat, than the practice of piety and virtue, are pharisees.

They were ambitious of worldly honour, loving the uppermost rooms at feasts, the chief seats in the synagogues, greetings in the markets, and the titles of Rabbi, Master, and Father. And every professor of religion who seeks distinction at feasts, and titles of honour, in one word, every proud professor, is a pharisee.

They regretted the murder, and embellished the sepulchres of the ancient prophets, and persecuted the modern. It follows, that those who are perpetually crying up the virtues, and lamenting the persecutions, of the primitive saints, but who stigmatize the piety and virtue of their contemporaries as enthusiasm and fanaticism, and languish for the repeal of the acts in favour of liberty of conscience; that they may imprison, torture, and hang reputed heretics, are rank pharisees.

If it be objected to the above, that a man ought not to be called a pharisee, who imitates the ancient pharisees only in some one particular; it may be replied, that in each of the particulars noted, they acted the hypocrite, and hypocrisy was the distinguishing characteristic of the sect: "Beware of the leaven of the

pharisees, which is hypocrisy." By this term, our Lord frequently designated them: "Be not as the hypocrites." "Woe unto you, hypocrites," etc.

Godwin divides the pharisees into seven sorts; but it is not worth while to go into a detail of their petty differences, since, in point of character, they were much the same.

But it will be said that they were not all alike; the worst of them might be as bad as here represented; but surely there were exceptions. I answer, that the remarks above characterise them as a sect; and it is to be feared that the exceptions were but few, as our Saviour never spoke favourably of them; and it would be an impeachment of his character, to suppose that his indiscriminate censures did not apply to them generally. The pharisee that went up to the temple to pray, gave himself a good character; but when we reflect that he went down to his house unjustified, and that hypocrisy, which includes lying, formed a constituent part of the character of a pharisee, we cannot attach much credit to his bare assertion. The apostle Paul is generally considered as having been a very moral man previous to his conversion; but this is doubtful. What he says of himself, (Phil. iii. 6,) that as touching the righteousness, which is of the law, he was blameless, is generally misunderstood. In the preceding verse, he informs us, that as touching the law, he was a pharisee, that is, he adopted their views and interpretations of it. But it has been shown that they made void the obligations of the moral part of it, by their traditions: they omitted justice, humanity, and fidelity; and substituted, in the room of these virtues, the washing of hands, the frequent repetition of long prayers, the payment of small tithes, etc. etc. The apostle might, therefore, as a pharisee, be reputed blameless, touching the law, though he paid no regard to its moral precepts. That he was not, in the proper sense of the word, blameless, as touching the moral law, is certain, because it convinced him of covetousness. (Rom. vii. 7.) He also acknowledges that he

“ was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious ;” he consented to the death of Stephen, and was “ exceeding mad” against the christians. It will, perhaps, be said, in palliation of his destructive zeal, that he thought he had been doing God service. This explains his motive, but does not justify his conduct. Bonner, Laud, and other fiery bigots, have acted under the same persuasion, and our Lord represents it as common to all persecutors : “ Whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service.” Some have supposed that his profession of innocence respected the letter of the law, rather than the spirit ; but even in this sense he was not blameless. The law saith, “ Thou shalt not covet. Thou shalt not kill.” Now, according to his own account, he violated the letter of the law in these two points ; and none but a pharisee can admit, that a man, whose heart is hardened by covetousness, and whose conscience is stained with human blood, is a moral character.

If it be objected, that the pharisees could not have been generally reputed pious, had they really been the monsters of iniquity here described ; the answer is, that in all ages the bulk of mankind have not considered the practice of moral virtue as necessary to form a character truly religious. Many fathers of the church, who were canonized by the papists, and whose title to saintship is considered as indisputable by many protestants, were remarkable for nothing but covetousness and cruelty ; they augmented the revenues of the church, and cursed, and persecuted to death, those whom they wickedly stigmatized as heretics. Have the Mandarins of China, and the Brahmins of Hindostan, gained their reputation for sanctity by a due discharge of all the duties of morality ? What makes a modern popish saint ? Believing as the church believes, attending mass, confessing to a priest, eating fish instead of flesh nearly half the year, and many other matters equally remote from a life of holiness. And what are those things which constitute many a modern protestant saint ? An orthodox creed, a zealous ob-

servance of the prescribed rites and ceremonies of worship, and hating all other denominations of christians? Thank God! in all ages there have been a few who could see that the practice of virtue is indispensable; but, as to the multitude, those who are at all conversant with history, and who notice the opinions and practices of their contemporaries, know that my representation of saintship is not a caricature, but a striking likeness. Reader, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," (or, as Dr. Campbell renders it, "the righteousness required by him,) in opposition to the righteousness required by the scribes and pharisees, and thou shalt be blessed with glory, honour, immortality, eternal life, while hypocritical pharisees shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

SKETCHES OF SERMONS.

SKETCH I.

"Never man spake like this man." (John vii. 46.)

THESE words were spoken in answer to a question proposed by the chief priests and pharisees, who having been galled to exasperation by the manner in which Christ had exposed their hypocrisy and corrupt glosses on the law, sent forth officers to seize and bring him to them for punishment. The officers went on this errand, but were so stricken with his doctrine and manner, that they had no power to take him. Disappointed and vexed by this circumstance, the priests demanded of them, "Why have ye not brought him?" To which they replied in the language of the text,

“Never man spake like this man.” Where observe,—

I. That the fascinating and persuasive tendency of Christ’s discourses did not arise from their being accommodated to the taste of his hearers ; he never pandered to the wickedness, the lusts, the errors, or the ignorance of men.

On the contrary, he always and strongly insisted on holiness, rigidly required a life of benevolence and righteousness, and differed nearly on all points from the manner and spirit of the Jewish teachers. Neither,—

2. Did the attractive influence of his discourses spring from any oratorical arts employed in their delivery. There can be no doubt but he possessed, in the highest degree, all the qualifications of a good orator. He thought clearly on all subjects ; expressed his conceptions most perspicuously and happily ; possessed an unexampled measure of judgment, and threw his whole soul into his discourses.

Yet on no occasion, and on no account whatever did he ever play the orator. As his teaching had a constant reference to the glory of God and the best interests of men, so was his language always plain, his sentences always short, his arguments weighty and convincing, and his fidelity of an uncompromising character. Nor yet,—

3. Did his discourses derive their telling tendency from any vehemence that he used, either in his voice or action. The sitting posture, which he generally assumed, would not admit of this.

But if it would have allowed of this, his mind and heart would never have permitted him to stoop to things so low and mean.

To what then—

II. Was the impression of his discourses owing?

To what? Why,—

1. To the surpassing excellency of his character.

A bad man undertaking to teach will be despised ; men will neither scruple, nor fail to say to such a teacher, “Physician, heal thyself.”

But the Saviour's reputation for moral rectitude, piety, devotion, and consistency, would give weight to his words. It is true that some, and some in high quarters too, said hard and evil things of him; but they said them out of hatred and malice, and could not substantiate them when urged to do so: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" No wonder, therefore, that his word should be with power.

2. The wisdom by which he spake must needs make his discourses most impressive. No opposer ever presented himself before him that he did not vanquish and put to shame.

How were the wily and subtle confounded, when with the utmost ease, he unravelled those of their sophisms which were most exquisitely spun! (See Matt. xxii. 15—46.)

3. His knowledge of man's heart, and his replies, observations and addresses to thoughts that were entertained, but not uttered, often struck his hearers with surprise and awe. (Matt. ix. 4—8; Mark ii. 8—12; Luke v. 21—26; vi. 7—11; ix. 47, 48; John ii. 24.)

4. His disinterested and irrespective manner of address must of necessity impress the people greatly, and give uncommon force to his word. He reproved the rich as well as the poor, yea and equally did so. This his very enemies acknowledged, and attempted to flatter and overreach him by making it; but their attempt was in vain. (See Mark xii. 12—17.)

5. The importance of his subject always gave weight to his discourses.

His subjects were never trivial, never trifling: had they been so, he could not have had the face to teach "that for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, seeing that by their words they shall be justified, and by their words they shall be condemned." (Matt. xii. 36, 37.)

His subjects were always fresh; he presented the invisible world to view, and astonished his hearers by the divine realities he brought before them.

6. His miracles most powerfully sanctioned his mission ; and hence his authority as a divine teacher, and the weight of his words, when he said, " But I say unto you," etc.

He said, " Ye sent unto John, and he bear witness unto the truth : But I have greater witness than that of John : for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." And,—

7. He pre-eminently spake by the Holy Ghost, and hence his speech was without a parallel. When he had read in the synagogue at Nazareth, " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind ; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." He closed the book ; and when the eyes of all were fastened on him, he began to say unto them, " This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." And as a proof that it was so, it is added, " And all bear him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Though in some respects you have not equal advantages with those who literally heard Christ, yet in others you are more highly favoured than they ; you can read his discourses, and can refer to them, even if your memory should fail you. But,—

2. Look at the end or design of his teaching, and take care that it be answered in you.

SKETCH II.

" It is finished." (John xix. 30.)

So thought the Jews. They had watchfully and unweariedly sought for an opportunity of accusing Jesus

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to the rulers and the people, of such things as should rouse the populace to clamour for his blood, and the rulers with courage to shed it. They had now gained their object, and concluded that all their liability to mortification, vexation, and troubles of every sort, was now at end; but in this they were much deceived, as its accumulated and continued growth was but now commencing.

But to other and more important topics these words are truly applicable. As,—

I. Jesus had finished his career of obedience to the law, as man; having fulfilled all righteousness. He had practised every virtue to the uttermost: and this was necessary, or his life had been forfeited for his own personal offences. (Matt. iii. 15.) For,—

1. As he was man, he was under law, and obligated to keep it perfectly: and from this obligation he could not have been released, until, as our substitute, he had fulfilled all righteousness, nor have borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

2. As he was to be a perfect pattern to his people, it was necessary that he should fulfil all righteousness, which included both his doing and his suffering the will of God; and in both he fully obeyed. He did his will; he was never idle: “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” “He went about doing good.” “My meat and my drink is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” And he suffered his will: he never shrunk from duty through fear of suffering. “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” Had he not drunk it, how could he have said, “If any man will come after me, that is, become my disciple and imitator, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

Observe, however, his object was not to provide a finished obedience for his people, such as should supersede all personal obedience on their part; with reverence be it spoken, such a provision he could not make. He —

II. Had finished his important ministry to man;—

Having taught as much of christian doctrine as the world could, for the present, bear, or as it could understand, in the present stage of his mediatorial work, it became necessary for him to complete it by offering up himself as a sacrifice for the sin of the world. And having done this, he,—

III. Had finished, that is, had accomplished, all that the types and shadows of the levitical economy had indicated, and had, therefore, superseded that economy altogether.

That economy had served many important purposes during its existence. It had been a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ ; it had kept alive in the minds of men an idea and an expectation of the great atoning sacrifice ; and now that that sacrifice was offered, it was meet that the hand which had pointed to it should disappear ; and all in that economy of ordinances which was against us, “He took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” (Col. ii. 14.) Let not any suppose, however, that he came to destroy or to undermine the authority of moral law. He came to free it from the false glosses put upon it, fully to explain it, and to give it all possible authority. And having done all this, he had —

IV. Finished transgression.

For a moment, when in the garden, he sorrowed even unto death ; he anticipated this great deed ; and now, bowing his head on the cross, and yielding up the ghost, he finished it. Before this hour, no atonement had ever been made, except in figure ; but now a perfect sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world, was presented to God ; for all sin, sins past and future. But mark it well, that,—

1. He has not finished our salvation, nor will he do it until the morning of the resurrection.

2. He has not finished and so superseded our work. We must hear, read, examine, repent, believe, and obey.

3. He will help us in and through our work if we look to and wait on him for help. “He will strengthen

you with might by his Spirit," etc. "I can do all things through Christ," etc.

4. Many of you have not begun this work ; and my fear is, you will have it to begin when it should be finished, and when it will be found too late to finish it,—

5. Remember every man's work shall be tried as by fire. (1. Cor. iii. 13.)

6. How dignified to die with such a work in hand, and in such a state of perfection ?

SKETCH III.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ?" (1 Cor. iii. 16.)

It is said that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands. "How should he ? for however excellent they may be in their design, however exquisite in workmanship, or splendid in their decorations, they are far too mean to be the palaces of a Being so glorious in holiness and so great in majesty.

Solomon seemed to doubt if God would dwell on earth, asking, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth ?" In reply we may in the language of inspiration say, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them," and not only with but in them by his Spirit. "For," saith the text, "Know ye not," etc. Here observe, —

I. That the Spirit of God is a person.

He has understanding. "He searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10.)

He has will. "But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally," etc. (1 Cor. xii. 11.)

His care for the church shows his personality. "Over which the Holy Ghost hath made you," etc. (Acts xx. 28.)

His personality appears from the form of baptism in

which the subject is set apart to him as well as to the Father and the Son.

The benediction, (2 Cor. xiii. 14,) shows this matter clearly. But observe —

II. This Spirit is a divine person.

In proof of this, consider the two last sections.

He is styled "Jehovah." (Heb. x. 15 — 17.) He is called "God." (Acts v. 3, 4.) He is said to be "eternal." (Heb. ix. 14.) He is uncreated, the fountain of being, self-existent, independent, etc.: is spoken of as "omnipresent." (Psalm cxxxix. 7 — 12.) As "omniscient." (1 Cor. ii. 11.) As "omnipotent," being man's Creator, (Psalm cxxxix. 13 — 16; Job xxxiii. 4,) and the Creator of all creatures and things. (Psalm civ. 30.)

He is man's regenerator. "Born again of the Spirit." "Born of God."

From the foregoing remarks we learn what the Spirit of God is; but —

III. Where is he? "Know ye not that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Some say he may be in us, but we cannot know it. What!

1. May he not be known by his work? When we see a palace, do we not know that some architect reared it, and not a brute? And what comparison is there betwixt the Spirit's work and ours? Ours all bad, and his all good. Every good thought, every gracious inclination, every godly purpose, and every holy action, is from him; how easily then may we know if he dwelleth in us!

2. How can we be ignorant whether he dwelleth in us or not?

Have we ever prayed sincerely and heartily to him that he would come and make his abode with us? We know he does not so come to stay with us without his being invited; he is indeed said to be found of those who sought him not; but this is in special cases only, to furnish peculiar specimens of grace, and is rather to be interpreted as a figure of speech, than as an ordinary

and every day fact. If you have prayed and are praying that he would thus come and make his abode with you, be assured he has visited you and is working in you, for without his presence and agency, you could no more be employed as you are, than you could originate your own existence.

3. He may have done something towards preparing us as temples for himself, and yet we be unfit to receive him: the Augean stable is not, perhaps, as yet thoroughly cleansed.

Is the sanctuary decorated with graces? Is it illumined with his glory? Is it meet for his abode?

4. Pray to him, nay, plead with him, to carry on and accomplish his work in you, this being absolutely necessary for your present, future, and eternal welfare. And—

5. Permit a word of caution to be given you; take care that you never grieve the Spirit of God; you may not be, and we hope you are not, in any great danger of doing so, by yielding to anything grossly sinful and offensive; your danger may be from the indulgence of a light, trifling spirit, leading to unprofitable and empty conversation, and the indulgence of a worldly spirit. And though you in none of these ways should give offence to him, yet if you omit, or but carelessly perform, your pious and devotional exercises, you will as certainly offend, as by indulging open sin.

IMPROVEMENT.

Do you say our caution is too late, that offence has been already given by bolting the heart so long against him, or by admitting into it again, those enemies with whom he will not and cannot remain? Well if such is the case, be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, and look for pardon through the great atonement, and he will forgive you, and purify you, and come into you. Yes, he will now come, if there is but a believing, longing, and obedient heart in you, and will treat you as though you had not offended.

SKETCH IV.

"To make all men to see what is the fellowship of this mystery," etc. (Ephes. iii. 9.)

MUCH as our curiosity may have prompted us to think hardly of the divine Being for not having made known to us much that we have wished to know; we cannot complain of his having hidden from us those things it concerns us most to know.

And among other things which he is anxious we should know, and which he has taken pains to spread out before us in all its interest and glory, is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning had been hid in God. Here observe,—

I. That by mystery is meant the privileges of the gospel dispensation. (See verses 2—6.)

They are thus called, having been kept in a state of comparative obscurity in past ages, but now no longer so.

2. Christians have fellowship in this mystery; they mutually participate in these privileges, there being nothing exclusive in the economy: all may be pardoned and know it; all may be sanctified wholly, and may enjoy an abiding sense of the divine presence.

As a church, all are joined together by one Spirit, (verse 10,) and are united to Christ, and have fellowship in all means, public and private.

3. All are to see their fellowship in this mystery.

All must understand that such a fellowship exists; a fellowship in holiness, to which all are called; (1. Pet. i. 15;) this is the characteristic of the church; (Ephes. v. 25—27;) those therefore are no true members of the church that are not holy.

It is also a fellowship in happiness or enjoyment. Gloominess is no credit to religion. We are called to rejoice evermore; and to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. (1 Thess. v. 16; 1 Peter i. 8.)

In short it is a fellowship in love. Christ prayed that all his might be one in love. "That they all may be one," etc. (John xvii. 20 — 23.)

4. The end why this fellowship should be seen is, that the world may know and believe that Christ came out from, and was authorized by God. The fellowship of sinners will not bear the light, for it is a shame to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. (Chap. v. 12.) Free masons, odd fellows, chartists, and ribbon men for instance: but the fellowship of this mystery will bear the light, and courts it. For, observe,—

II. The subjects of the heavenly governments are to see the manifold wisdom of God in the salvation and government of the church militant.

They, in all probability see new displays of the wisdom of God in every successive visit they pay to this world. "Which things the angels desire to look into." We shall not learn everything at once, when we get to heaven.

2. They see manifold wisdom, that is, various displays of it. They see the wisdom of God in the atonement he has provided for sin, which marvellously exhibits the wisdom of his government in reconciling the exercise of his mercy and his justice, his purity, and a relaxation of his right.

3. They see the wisdom of God in the gradual development of his will, allowing the world an opportunity to see whether in its wisdom it could attain to a right knowledge of God; and when it could not, then, in ordaining that man should be saved by the foolishness of preaching, through faith; (1 Cor. i. 21;) thus putting his energy into the gospel, and making it his powerful instrument to save men. (Rom. i. 16.)

4. They see the wisdom of God in governing the world for the benefit of his church, making all events, persons and things, to minister to the church's protection, growth and glory. (Ephes. i. 22; Rom. viii. 28.) In short,—

5. They see the wisdom of God to be so manifold

and consummate, as to justify us in saying that this is Jehovah's masterpiece.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. The gospel is explained to you, it is a mystery no longer ; you see the fellowship of saints is a reality, a benefit, man's glory ; enter into it ; your judgment approves, why do you hesitate ?

2. Those who have a part in this fellowship, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, etc. (Chap. v. 11.) Take heed that you have none.

3. Be not content that with the angels you see God's manifold wisdom in the salvation and government of his church, and that you share in the advantages of this fellowship ; but endeavour diligently and constantly to bring others, and all, to a participation of the same good.

SKETCH V.

" As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 14.)

WHAT, and none else ? No ; not one—

For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, and that to lead him too, he is none of his. Where observe—

I. That we have need of the Spirit of God to guide us :—

1. Many are led by passion and appetite : reason is but their slave, and is only employed in making apologies for their excesses—

2. There are others, and many of them, who are wholly led by the world : they must do as other people do, they cannot pretend to be singular ; and if they could, they dare not do it—

But, after all, the world is a very unsafe, nay, a very bad guide ; it is always changing, and the fashion of it passing away. Were it right to-day, in all probability it would be wrong to-morrow—

And were it otherwise, we are not at liberty to make

it our guide. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," etc. "If any man will be a friend of the world, he is the enemy of God."

3. Some affect to be led by reason, apart from, or independent of revelation. But that we may know what sort of a guide unassisted reason is, let us look at those nations which have no other guide; they are either shockingly superstitious, or they have no religion at all.

4. Some are wholly for being led by impulse: but this must be an unsafe guide while the mind is wholly unenlightened by the word of God, or but very partially so; and it must be a most pernicious and perilous one, while the heart is altogether enmity against God,—

And it never can be a safe one, until the heart is wholly governed by perfect love to God and man, and the mind is thoroughly instructed in the word and will of God—

But even then, the word of God, not impulse, is to be our authorized counsellor. But mark it well, it is not.

5. Revelation without the Spirit's light on it, but as opened and applied by him. Some there are who reason thus upon this point: "The word of God is infallible; and we cannot want two infallible guides; neither can the allwise God have furnished two, where only one is wanted; therefore we have but one that we ought to follow, and that is the unerring word of God alone."

But in opposition to this hasty, haughty, and most fallacious conclusion, we would observe,—

(1.) That men are said to be blind; they cannot read the directions given to guide us in the road; they cannot see the road itself. Hence their need to pray, "Open thou mine eyes," etc.; and of the like operation as that recorded, Luke xxiv. 45, "Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures." Besides—

(2.) They are void of any inclination to walk in God's

way, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts. And, consequently, before any man can be capable of walking in this way, his aversion to it must be destroyed : and who can do this but the Spirit of grace. But when —

(3.) We are renewed, until we be entirely so, we are often if not generally very weak, and much in need of the Spirit's aid ; and when perfectly renewed, we can no more maintain our steps in this way, by and of ourselves, than we could find and get into it without help : And from what other source than the Spirit of God can this help be drawn ? “ That he would grant you,” etc. (Ephes. iii. 16.)

(4.) We cannot walk in God's ways without comfort as they sometimes, perhaps often, prove very exhausting to the mind ; and whence can we fetch this comfort, but from the Spirit ? “ Walking in the,” etc. And observe —

III. That all who are led of the Spirit of God are the sons of God. But how does this appear ? How ? why —

1. Because those who are led of the Spirit, must first be born again of him, and being so, are sons of God. (John i. 12, 13.) “ To as many as received him, to them gave he power,” etc.

2. Because they have received the Spirit of adoption into their hearts, and he dwells in them : “ Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth,” etc. (Gal. iv. 6.) “ Hereby know we,” etc. (1. John iv. 13.) This the Spirit attests. (Verse 16.)

3. And as they are taken into this relation, the dispositions that best accord with it, and most benefit it, are given to them. They love, reverence, and obey their heavenly Father. “ For he that loveth not, knoweth him not, for God is love.” (1. John iv. 8.) “ And he that loveth God, loveth him that is begotten of him.” (1. John v. 1.) If such were not the case, we could not be exhorted to exercise that mind which was in Christ, and to be followers of God as dear children, (see Phil. ii. 5 ; Ephes. v. 1,) refraining from

all conformity to our former lusts, and putting on the closest resemblance to our heavenly Father. (1. Peter i. 14 — 16.)

IMPROVEMENT.

1. The Spirit does not operate mechanically, he leads sons, does not drive slaves.

2. The Spirit inspires no new revelation ; nor does he bring what he never brought before ; avoid enthusiasm.

3. Take heed how you treat your guide : do not vex him ; do not grieve him lest he depart, etc.

4. Consider and claim your privileges as sons, particularly at the throne of grace.

5. Take heed that you never act in a manner unbecoming the relation in which you stand.

SKETCH VI.

“ O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ? ” (Matt. xiv. 31.)

THE great sin of worldlings and mere professors of religion is believing too much, seeing such believe without warrant ; but the failing of God’s people is in believing too little, fearing to believe, where they have God’s warrant for doing so, as in the case before us : Peter had Christ’s warrant for going to his master on the water, and for believing that he should be upborne on the waves. For awhile he did believe and walked, but at length his faith waxed feeble, and he began to sink and to cry, and was heard, and thus addressed. Where, observe,—

I. Peter had thought himself possessed of strong faith. (Verse 28.)

Certainly but few would have ventured to do what he did ; but he took his faith to be stronger than it was. And we often think our faith is strong before it is tried, and then we find it to be but feeble.

That is little faith which is exercised in the power, but not in the willingness of God to deliver and bless his people; for what weightier reasons have we for trusting in the power of God than in his goodness and readiness to help and save? Have we any?

Let it not, however, be forgotten that what there is of faith, though it be but little, it is good, because it is genuine, and it will conduct us to Christ, and cause us to cleave to him. Peter did not call for a rope, or try to save himself by swimming.

And little faith will lead us to pray earnestly in our extremity. Peter cried, "Lord save me." But—

II. Genuine faith, if little, will often be mixed with doubts and fears, as,—

When our necessity is very urgent, or our danger great, and strongly impressing the senses. Thus Jesus had bid Peter come to him, but the winds were whistling, and the waves were roaring and raging, hence his faith gave way.

You are now coming to Jesus, and coming at his bidding too, but what if an alarm were given, that the chapel is giving way and falling, what would your faith be? *

2. Genuine faith, though little, will comfort and encourage you, so long and so far as you look to the power, the goodness, and the veracity of God: and it is only as the enemy shall succeed in turning your attention suddenly and closely to your unworthiness, great sinfulness, and rich desert of punishment, that faith will yield to fear. Be on your guard, therefore.

3. When the answer of your prayers and the grant of your expectations follow closely on their being offered and indulged, your faith, though little, will steadily support you; but when the Lord defers his answers and supplies, then faith, if little, like a slender twig, bends under the weight incumbent on it.

Peter expected to walk as cleverly as his Master on the water; but when the support was deferred, owing to his greater attention to the winds and waves than to

* This outline was very probably prepared or employed on some occasion of chapel opening. — EDIT.

his Master's command, his faith failed, and his power to tread the water ceased, in consequence of which he began to sink.

And wherefore is it that we doubt of success, or safety, while acting under Christ's command? What reason have we for doing so, or can we have? None whatever. Hence,—

III. The reproof which is here given; for this is the language of reproof.

It is gentle reproof, it is true, compared with what is merited; for what reason for doubting have we now, that we have not always had? And if ever our faith was commendable and necessary, it must be so at this time.

Can we have any ground for doubting of his care, while we give him credit for his love?

And what reason have we to call his love in question? It was—

1. Love, not power, which brought him down from heaven to our help.

2. It was love to us that carried him through his sufferings for us.

3. It is love to us that induces him to make intercession for us.

4. It was his love for us that moved him to give to us such exceeding great and precious promises.

5. His love to men has taken millions of them to heaven, and certainly it will not leave you behind.

But see that you have true faith, be it ever so little; rest not in light, however great, nor yet in good desires, however good; no, nor yet in godly purposes, however godly; for some have advanced thus far, and after all have perished.

But why should any be content with little faith, when they may have much? And may not all have much? Shall we ever have better means for acquiring it? or can we have better means? Have we not those very means which have given rise to strong faith in many of our fellow christians? and would they not do the same in us, if skilfully and prayerfully employed? Let us then pray, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief."

SKETCH VII.

“ Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time.” (Col. iv. 5, 6.)

THE welfare of the church of Christ always requires that its members should walk in wisdom towards them that are within its pale, as, without this, the more fickle of its members would be made weaker, and stumbled, and the edification of itself in love would be impossible.

But it is not less necessary to its welfare that its members should walk in wisdom towards them that are without its pale, as without this the church could never be replenished, nor yet sinners be converted to God. Observe,—

I. The behaviour which the Spirit of God commands the disciples of Christ to maintain towards those that are without, that is, without the church, unbelievers : these are never called christians in the New Testament, as that would be misnaming them.

Those that are within, the saints judge ; but those that are without, God judgeth.

To walk in wisdom towards these, consists in pursuing a good end by the best means. Now one end is—

(1.) That those without do us no hurt that are within.

It is not an easy matter to breathe in a contagious atmosphere, and escape infection. “ Evil communications corrupt good manners,” etc. “ To keep himself unspotted from the world.”

(2.) Another end to be followed is, that we who are within do no hurt to them that are without. We hurt them if we deepen their prejudice, or harden them in sin ; and to avoid these, we must neither support their principles and practices, nor yet connive at them.

Nor must we render them obstinate and perverse in their offences, by adopting an undue severity towards them at any time, or on any account.

On the contrary, we should endeavour to bring

about their conversion, this being an object greatly to be wished. "He that winneth souls is wise." "And they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars," etc. But whoever would attain this end, must soften, dissolve, and annihilate men's prejudices against religion, by convincing them that it is a real thing, a good thing, and the best thing in the world.

(3.) Our last end to be pursued is to redeem the time or opportunity which remains for promoting their benefit and securing our own: the season for securing these objects cannot be long, at best—

It may prove very, very, short—

It therefore should be seized instantly, improved industriously, and pursued with an unwearied and a persevering constancy.

In short, he who would make the most of his brief opportunity for benefiting others and himself, especially those without, must—

II. Adopt the advice here given: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt."

Speech was given to man, as an immortal being: had he been intended for this life only, he might have done without it, as other animals do.

Though it must be acknowledged, it is a distinguished source of pleasure and enjoyment, because a great means of improvement and dignity.

But being designed for an immortal and exalted felicity, it was meet and necessary that he should be thus endowed; and if we would train this gift in the best manner, it should "always be with grace," with a good and benevolent intent, to others and to all.

(2.) It should always be of a gracious nature, if not always of grace as its theme. We cannot, strictly speaking, make grace our only theme, while we have to live in and by the world; but our speech may always be of a gracious nature, seeing we may always speak, even of earthly things, in such a way as to demonstrate that we are enlightened and benevolent, and wish to be approved by God and all good men.

And if our speech may always be of a gracious nature,

even when speaking of earthly things, how much more may it be so, when speaking of those that are heavenly !
But—

(3.) Then is our speech with most grace, when it is most seasoned with salt : when it is best calculated to check the corrupting tendency of ordinary conversation among worldly and wicked men, and to amend and elevate, if not wholly to change, its character, by making men ashamed of it.

This godly course will lead us—

III. To an important discovery ; we shall learn how we ought to answer every man. This knowledge requires an acquaintance with religion in its theory, which can only be obtained by reading and studying the Bible, or by hearing it read and expounded ; by reading and studying other sound and sensible books on the same subject, and by conversation. This course of inquiry will not fail to spread out the theory of religion before us in all its beautiful proportions : and we shall have sufficient scope for the exercise of this knowledge, seeing we are to be ready always “ to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.”

And where is the man that hath not objections to be met, doubts and difficulties to be solved, and fears and feebleness that call for help ?

IMPROVEMENT.

1. No man, that is no christian man, doth, or has any right to live to and for himself : on the contrary, he should endeavour to be useful.

2. God will make those useful, who scripturally endeavour so to be.

3. These two, works and words, never should be separated ; works may convince and give rise to resolution ; but words, and words only, can declare what must be done in order to salvation.

Works, therefore, without words, will do but little for us ; but words without works will do less.

SKETCH VIII.

“Come over into Macedonia and help us.” (Acts. xvi. 9, 10.)

“FREELY ye have received, freely give,” is a principle of action clearly inculcated in the New Testament. This is right in temporal things we know; for “whoso hath this world’s goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” And if we are to be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, in temporal things, how much more should we be so in spiritual ones! Whenever any are found in need of aid, especially of spiritual aid, as far as we are able, we are bound to assist them, and as soon.

It was on this principle that St. Paul furnished help so readily to this Macedonian applicant.

In discoursing on these words let us,—

I. Consider what we may account to be a call to preach the gospel to the heathen.

II. How we may assuredly gather that it ought to be sent to any particular place in preference to others.

I. We have to consider what we may account to be a call, etc.

1. Christianity, or the love of God and man, inspired by the Holy Ghost, prompts to it; hence, if all were filled with the Spirit, no other prompter would be wanted.

2. Christ’s command to his apostles may surely be considered as a call to the work. (Matt. xxviii. 19.) For commands and promises delivered to the representatives of the church, concern the whole church, as far as they are applicable to the states of its several members. Thus the promises and commands to Moses, concerned the Jewish church; and those delivered to the apostles, the christian.

(3.) Promises to encourage us in the work may be considered as a call to send the gospel to the heathen. Our judgment and experience tell us that it would be a good thing for the world, if it were converted; and

the scriptures assure us that it shall be so, and stimulate us to attempt it, telling us that we shall assuredly succeed in the attempt. But—

(4.) The very extent of the atonement itself, it being provided for all the fallen and perishing of mankind, ought to be considered as a call to christians to send the gospel to every intelligent creature in the world : for God would not have provided this atonement for all, if he had not desired and willed the salvation of all. And that this was provided for all, is expressly stated when it is said, that “ God sent not his son into the world, to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

Nor are we left to infer that God wills the salvation of all, but are plainly and expressly told so ; for in the New Testament we are exhorted to make supplications, prayers, and intercessions, with giving of thanks for all men, seeing this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour ; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” If then he will have all to be saved, he must will that all men should have the gospel of salvation preached to them. But how may we —

II. Assuredly gather that it ought to be sent to any particular place in preference to others? How? why—

(1.) The place to which Paul’s attention was now directed was a Roman colony, and Paul was a Roman citizen, thus showing us, that when a door is open to any fellow subjects in a heathen state, we have an especial call to give them the gospel.

And being fellow subjects, we have peculiar facilities in sending it.

(2.) The man in the vision represented the disposition of the people to be favourably inclined towards the gospel. “ Come over and help us.” When the people of any place are willing and desirous to have christian teachers sent to them, and when as Cornelius and his friends, they are gathered together to hear words of them whereby they may be saved, it surely may be considered a sufficient call to send the gospel to them.

(3.) The apostle and his friends were waiting for a call, and were ready to go: thus when God provides men, who are willing and wishful to go, and we have places that are wanting such men, we surely ought to consider ourselves as called by that Providence which gave us the men to send them.

(4.) When we have success in any place, it surely demonstrates that we had a call to send the gospel to it, and that we are in the path of duty in continuing the gospel there, so long as the success remains.

We readily admit that men may be proselyted without being genuinely converted; proselytism, therefore, is no certain mark of success; but where a real work of conversion is in progress, which must be admitted to be of God, there we may boldly affirm that we have success, and are in the path of duty in continuing the gospel there. "Ye are our epistles, written by the Spirit of God." These prove our mission as well as his. Abbe du Bois laboured thirty years in India, without making a single convert, according to his own confession; and we want no other proof that he was never sent of God.

(5.) Men's pressing need of help may fairly be interpreted as an infallible indication that the gospel ought to be sent to them. Some, perhaps, will say, that the heathen are as good as we are: but this is not true, their religion increases depravity; ours, as far as ever it acts, corrects it. Look at their degraded superstitions; there is no longer a halo of glory thrown around their filth, their gore and vice. Seeing therefore that they are weary of the tyrant's yoke, and are anxious to break it from their necks, surely it is our duty to assist them in freeing themselves from it, and to claim them for the Lord. And let it be observed —

(6.) That our gospel will help them. It is admirably adapted for the work; and there is nothing else that can help them. Hence then we gather that it is our duty to raise the means of sending this gospel by men of God to the heathen, and of aiding them by our prayers.

SKETCH IX.

“ Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.” (Luke xxiv. 46.)

THESE words were spoken to the disciples of the Saviour on the day of his resurrection. Jesus joined himself to them as they were assembled on the evening of that day, and were receiving the account of his journeying with two of his disciples to Emmaus, and was made known to them in breaking of bread, and said unto them, “Peace be unto you. But they were affrighted,” etc. (Verses, 37—44.) And having directed their attention to what was written of himself in Moses, in the prophets, and in the Psalms, then opened he their understandings, etc. Then opened he their understandings, (when they could more readily see and receive their meaning—and when it became necessary that they should understand them for their own comfort and the world’s instruction,) and taught them that as it was thus written, it behoved him thus to suffer and rise again the third day. Observe then—

I. That it was necessary that he should thus suffer as it had been written of him. Not—

(1.) To confirm his doctrine.

Some of the prophets and apostles suffered no martyrdom, who nevertheless sufficiently confirmed their doctrine. And other prophets, as Enoch and Elijah, did not die at all, yet they fully confirmed their doctrine: there could therefore be no need that Christ should die for this purpose. But—

(2.) It was necessary that he should suffer that he might be a sacrifice for sin. So Daniel: “He was cut off, but not for himself; it was to finish transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity.” So Isaiah, “The Lord laid on him,” etc. “He shall bear their iniquities,” etc. “If it be possible, let this cup,” etc. But it was not possible; for without shedding of blood is no remission. The papists

offer an unbloody sacrifice; can such a sacrifice obtain remission for us? *They* offer Christ; but Christ offered *himself*.

(3.) There was no natural necessity that Christ should suffer.

He had not sinned, and therefore was not liable to suffer for any sin of his own. But there was a moral necessity for his suffering, or the world must have perished; the necessity of his suffering, therefore, sprang from his love. (John iii. 16, 17.) But there was—

(4.) A necessity for his suffering that the word might be fulfilled, for thus it was written. It was foretold that he would suffer, as the prediction was to be part of the external evidence of divine revelation; and having been predicted, it was necessary that the prediction should be verified.

APPLICATION.

If it was necessary that Christ should suffer for sin, it is equally necessary that we should have faith in the efficacy of his sufferings; we must not merely believe the fact, but trust in the merit of it. This merit must be appropriated, or afflicted consciences cannot be relieved. Observe—

II. There was an equal necessity why he should rise the third day. There—

(1.) Was no necessity that he should rise to confirm his doctrine; for if it were so, then the doctrine of the prophets and apostles remains unconfirmed to this day, as they are not risen. Nor in that case would his own doctrine have been obligatory prior to his resurrection; though he said before this that the Jews had no cloak for their sin, that is, in rejecting his doctrine. “The works that I do, bear testimony of me.” “If ye believe not me, believe the works.”

(2.) It was necessary that he should rise to complete his priestly work. He was to appear before God with his own blood: he was to make intercession for the people: and he was to bless them.

(3.) It was necessary that he should rise to take the reins of government, or the control of all beings and things, good and bad, into his hands, for the purpose of bringing his many sons to glory.

(4.) It was necessary that he should rise to dispense the Spirit to his followers. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come."

(5.) It was requisite that he should rise as the first fruits of those that sleep in him. If he had not risen, neither had we, for he is to raise us. "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him," etc. "As in Adam all die," etc. He is placed instead of Adam at the head of our race.

(6.) It was necessary that he should rise the third day. Had he risen sooner, it might have been said that he did not die, and so could not rise again. And had he lain longer in the grave than was necessary to prove the reality of his death, disrespect had been shown to his meritorious offering. And had he not risen on the third day, what had become of the truth of that prophecy, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption?" In agreement with this prediction he rose the third day. The Jews deny this; so do our infidels; but how? and with what consistency?

(7.) On the Socinian scheme, his resurrection was not necessary to the completion of his work as priest, for his death completed it. Had he lain in the grave until now, no disrespect had been shown to his sacrifice; as, according to that scheme, he offered none. Neither was it necessary that he should rise to give the Holy Ghost, as there was no Holy Ghost to give.

The late Mr. Belsham said of the Saviour, we know not where he is, or what he is doing: and in saying so, we doubt not he uttered the sentiments of his brethren; they can do very well without him, for any use they make of him.

But what can you do without him? If he is not

risen, all gospel preaching is vain, and your believing is vain.

Ye are yet in your sins—

Is he not risen? then what is said of his being risen as the first fruits of them that sleep in him, and of his being able to raise you and appointed to do it, is all an airy, empty, delusive dream.

If you know not where he is, and what he is doing, then must your case be one of doubt, anxiety, and fear. But such is not your case.

But if you know where he is, and what he is doing, and what he will do; see to it that you live by his work, that you live in conformity to your profession, obligation, and interests.

SKETCH X.

“What do ye more than others?” (Matt. v. 47.)

JESUS having now entered upon his ministry, went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people. The consequence was, his fame spread through all Syria, and they brought to him their sick, their lunatics, their paralytics, and possessed persons, and he healed them. On these accounts great multitudes followed him, and seeing them, he went up into a mountain for convenience, took his seat, as a teacher, and then proceeded to address the people. His disciples being nearest to him, he directed this inimitable discourse to them, and through them to the multitudes. Observe—

I. That though this sermon was in an especial manner directed to his immediate disciples, yet is it applicable to and obligatory on all christians of whatever time or place.

The law, which it freed from all the false glosses put on it, and which it so fully and impressively expounded, was not only intended as an instrument of conviction, but as a rule of conduct for men to walk by.

(2.) The drift of this discourse was not to teach the disciples their need of faith in order to salvation, for they were believers already; no, nor yet to teach the doctrine of justification by works, for that would have been to contradict Genesis xv. 6, and many other places. Nor was it to teach the way of justification at all, as the disciples were already justified. But—

(3.) It was designed to teach the only way in which we can manifest our justification, and demonstrate the reality and perfection of our renovation; and that is, by walking continually in the practice of those works that are pre-eminently pure and good.

It was especially designed to furnish a rule of action which should in all cases be easy of application, and productive of the greatest amount of good to man, whether in solitude or social life. In short, it was intended to teach and train us to that course of godly living which shall best accord with the light, the purity, the benevolence, and the glory, of the christian covenant.

And considering what God has done for all those on whose behalf, and for whose benefit he has ordained, set up, and established the christian dispensation; he is entitled to look for a prompt and most affectionate improvement of his loving-kindness to mankind.

But, alas! the greater part, yea, the far greater part of men are anything but what they should be. Let it, however, be observed,—

II. That God expects his people to act a very different part. “What do ye more than others?” If they do not more, and are not widely different from others, they furnish no proof to others that they are the genuine disciples of the Saviour.

And unless they very much surpass others in all things pertaining to religion and to life, they have but little that can certify an enlightened and tender conscience, that they do indeed belong to the family of God.

Do we not know more, much more of the divine will, and of that which is good in his sight than any of the

children of this world can know, seeing they neither consult nor receive God's revealed will?

And do we not profess to have more light, more regard for God, more benevolence to men, than the children of this world do?

And have we not been laid under greater obligations to God, than men ordinarily are, having received more from him than they have done?

And have we not promised and vowed to God much more, very much more, than they?

And is not his glory much more intimately connected with our doings than theirs?

And we acknowledge too that we ought to do more than barely differ from the world in profession and appearance: a parrot may talk; ay, and a monkey may play antics.

(1.) We must do more than others, yea, than any others who have not real religion, in morals. Those who are governed by established usages and customs come short of the text. We must break through and away from every-thing that is evil. Our light must "shine before men." (See preceeding verses.)

It is not enough to come up to the custom of trade; we must inquire if the custom is lawful and equitable.

(2.) We must excel others in our dispositions, tempers, and speech. (See preceeding verses.)

(3.) We must go beyond others in our regard for the cause of Christ: worldlings will attend public worship; they will even give to it; nay, and some will give to it their anise, and mint, and cummin. But we must worship God in spirit and truth; we must give from principle, and have a well-regulated and an unabated zeal for its honour and furtherance.

(4.) Infidels originate no good institutions, promote not good and godly education; we must do both; in short, our motto must be, "Be better than others; do more than others."

SKETCH XI.

“ Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” etc.
(Heb. xii. 2 — 4.)

WHATEVER our degree of light, whatever the measure of our consideration, or to whatever height our courage and constancy may rise, we still shall need motives to animate and cheer us in our christian course so as that we may gain the goal. Aware of this the apostle in the first verse draws our attention to departed saints, as a cloud of witnesses encompassing us about, to animate us.

He next directs our attention to Jesus, our great Exemplar, to animate us. Where observe—

I. Jesus is set before us as a motive, under the idea of his being —

First. The author of our faith.

(1.) He is the author of the scriptures which contain our faith. But for him, there had been no revelation of divine mercy.

(2.) He is the principal subject of which the scriptures treat ; take Christ out of the scriptures, and what of any interest or importance to man have you left ?

(3.) He inspires the principle of faith in the heart. This I take to be the meaning of St. Paul, Philippians i. 29, “ For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him.” etc. He not only gives you opportunity to believe, encouragement to believe, and assists you so to do ; but often works in you sovereignly, to produce such an effect in you. But he —

Secondly. Is the finisher of our faith.

(1.) He carries it on in us. Under this notion he was addressed by the poor man who brought his afflicted son to him for a cure. Jesus said to him, “ If thou canst but believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. Then said the man, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.” (Mark ix. 24.) And under the same idea, the apostles prayed to him, when they

found it difficult to receive his word, "Lord increase our faith."

He carries it on in us by the intimations, declarations, and promises of his word; all of which, but especially the last, are in Jesus Christ, yea, and amen. To these therefore he draws our attention; on these he leads us to meditate; these he opens and applies, and on these he prompts us to venture and trust.

(2.) He finishes our faith by giving us the perfect and eternal enjoyment of all the great and glorious things he has promised to us in the heavenly state. Unto this Saviour it is that—

II. The eye of our faith. "Looking unto Jesus the author," etc.

He was no probationer on earth, and consequently in no danger of miscarriage; but he was exposed to many difficulties and disagreeables, and therefore had scope for the exercise of those graces and virtues which made him a proper and glorious example to all his disciples in every age and place. So long therefore as we dwell in this bewildering and perilous region, we ought to fix our eye on him, and mark his conduct—

(1.) He endured great contradiction of sinners against himself, that is, varied, violent and determined opposition, in word and deed, from those whose wrath and malice knew no bounds; hence they were not to be deterred from their opposition by any displays of excellence and majesty, but to his very face offered every insult and indignity. Yet all this was endured without the least retaliation: they found no end of his patience, forbearance, and pity. On such an example we cannot too steadily fix our eye.

(2.) He endured the cross.

No death can be more lingering, painful, and cruel, than that of the cross, and therefore bad to endure, under any circumstances, even when most deserved; what then must it be, when not deserved at all, but the contrary. Yet he patiently endured its lingering agonies, indulging in no feeling but that of pity for his murderers.

The cross, since our Lord endured its pain, has been proverbial for suffering, and is that which every disciple of Christ is to be in readiness to endure, if called to it. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." etc.

(3.) He despised the shame, that is, the shame of the cross.

The cross was too shameful and ignominious a death for any to be doomed to but slaves and the worst criminals. It was, if possible, more disgraceful than the gallows is in this country. Yet Jesus made light of this shame; so far was he from fainting at the prospect of it, that he looked on it as a thing undeserving of his regard, treated it as a trifle, and felt it to be such. Do you rise above the shame connected with your christian profession, associates, and services? What hinders you from following in your Master's track? Remember —

(4.) That your Master was prompted and assisted patiently and magnanimously, to pass through the unparalleled scene of his suffering, by the joy that was set before him. "Who for the joy that was set before him," etc. That joy consisted in promoting Jehovah's glory by the reheading and redeeming of the human race. See a remarkable reference to the presentation of this joy in Isaiah l. 1 — 6. This work being ever before him, he was straitened until he had accomplished it. And when accomplished, he then sat down at the right hand of the throne of God to complete his work by intercession and government, and to enjoy the establishment and augmentation of his mediatorial glory.

How disinterested his joy! Not so ours; we are allowed to look at our own interests.

How great his love! We sometimes doubt if he will plead for us. Yet on what can his heart be more set?

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Let us see to it that this beginner of faith in men, produce it in ourselves: has he done it? If not,

depend on it the fault is ours, not his ; and unless he work it in us, we shall finally perish with the unbelievers. (John iii. 36.)

2. Having faith in him, look to him by faith ; meditate much and frequently on what he did, on what he suffered, and on his manner of doing them ; also on the motive that actuated him in his course, that you may never be weary or faint in your minds.

3. Let nothing divert you from your purpose of looking unto and considering Jesus your great Exemplar.

SKETCH XII.

“ How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God ! ” (Mark x. 23.)

BUT how can this be ? Are we not told that pardons, indulgences, and masses, may be had for money ? And if so, then that relief in and deliverance from the pains of purgatory may be had for the same commodity. But then how can it be a hard thing for those that are rich to enter into the kingdom of God ? It is evident enough, therefore, that the Romanist's doctrines respecting pardons, indulgences, masses, etc., and the doctrine of the text cannot agree or stand together ; and which is to give way, judge ye.

And if religion, either wholly or chiefly consisted in benevolence, then could it not be so hard a thing for the rich to enter the kingdom of God ; but as it consists in the new man, “ Which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness ; ” hence there may be, and is, much difficulty attending the entrance of the rich into the kingdom of God. But,—

I. How can these things be ? For,—

1. The rich man is under no temptation either to cheat or steal.

Poor men, when greatly pressed by poverty, are tempted to do so for supplies.

And those who are not pressed by poverty, but who

hunger and thirst to be rich, are but too often tempted to make haste to be rich, and to overreach and steal for that purpose.

But the rich are saved from such temptations.

2. The rich are under no temptation to murmur at the dealings of divine providence.

The poor are in danger of that; and those who cannot lay hold of wealth as soon, or to that amount, which they desire, are in danger of doing it; and all who are tempted to murmur at the conduct of divine providence, and yield to it, if they ever had any religion have lost some, if not the whole, of what they had, and so cannot be saved in that state. And without religion there is nought but hell for them.

3. Riches afford a man the means of doing good; and he who does good with his wealth lays up in store for himself "a good foundation against the time to come, that he may lay hold on eternal life." (Tim. vi. 19.)

4. A rich man's charity will engage the prayers of others for him; and these his friends will be ready to receive him into everlasting habitations. Besides,—

5. As riches exempt a man from so much inconvenience and suffering, and furnish so powerful an incentive to gratitude and obedience to God, may we not fairly and with much propriety ask,—

II. What great difficulty can there be lying in the way of a rich man's entrance into the kingdom of God? What difficulty?

Why every man finds it difficult to enter it; for his entrance into it is opposed by the world, the flesh, and the devil; and so do these oppose, that he has to labour, to run, to fight, and to suffer, to get in; nay, he has to deny himself and take up his cross daily to do it.

But the rich find it peculiarly hard to enter in. For,—

1. Riches generate a spirit of independence on the providence of God. We are prone to say in our hearts as we become rich, "My might, and the power of my hand, hath gotten me this wealth." (Deut. viii. 17.)

2. The possession of riches often leads to false impressions of divine favour. We are apt to consider riches given as a reward of excellency, rather than as a trust.

3. The possession of wealth often unfits for the discharge of most important duties ; as visiting the sick poor, holding communion with the saints, especially poor saints, while rich men in the church cannot endure if they may not be allowed to have the pre-eminence.

4. Rich persons often take it so ill to be reprov'd, or even to be told of their faults, especially by persons beneath them in rank, and have it so much in their power to annoy those who dare to do it, that it is but seldom that they are faithfully dealt with, and are often flattered.

5. Riches but too often inflame avarice. The young man in the text would have followed Christ had he been poor ; but the parting with his wealth he could not brook ; he rather wished for more than less.

6. If the rich escape the foregoing evils, they are in danger of pampering their bodily appetites, of feasting the eye with delectable scenes and finery, the ear with melodious sounds and harmony, and to gratify the flesh with ease and softness.

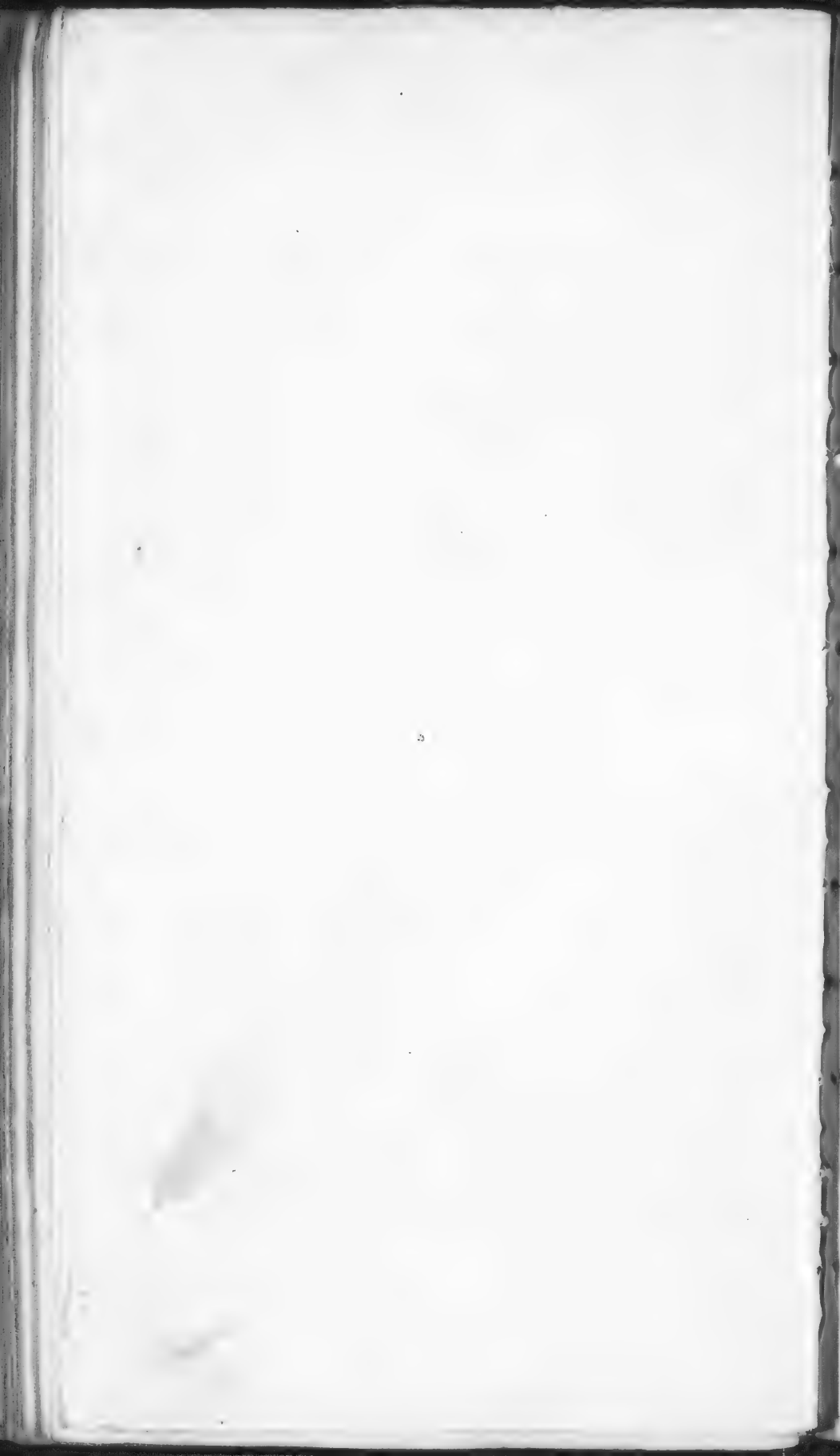
7. Riches but too often lead us to indulge our children and dependents (if we have any) in pride and parade, in idleness and vice. Thus do riches blind the mind, steal away the heart, indulge the flesh, and proportionately indispose men to conversion, and to submit themselves to God : and thus it is that they stand in the way of man's salvation.

Yet after all, who is there that believes this doctrine ? Would not all like to make the experiment or trial for themselves ?

From what has been said, we see how it comes to pass that so few deeply or even truly pious persons are rich ; namely, because so many seek, or at least come at, wealth before religion is thought of, and then they

cannot submit to the terms on which alone it can be had. Or if religion and wealth come together, the surpassing love of wealth and other things springs more rankly, and so chokes the seed.

From the whole we may learn what cause the poor have to be resigned to the dispensations of divine providence in allotting to them so small a portion of this world's goods, and in preferring to give to them the true riches; and we see too how much reason there is why they should make the most of their advantage.



LETTERS TO THE PROTESTANT
METHODISTS.

LETTERS TO THE PROTESTANT METHODISTS.

PREFACE.

It is well known that the writer of this tract disapproves of instruments of music in public worship; that he was not satisfied with everything done by the trustees and preachers, in reference to the organ question, and the disputes which arose out of it; and that he spoke his mind at considerable length on these subjects at the London Conference. Whatever the errors of the preachers might be, however, he was satisfied they were errors of the judgment and not of the heart; and not of sufficient magnitude to justify a separation from the connexion. Those ministers are surely to be pitied, who are neither allowed to profess infallibility, nor to make a mistake. He gave the complainants, too, credit for their assertions, that their opposition to the organ was the dictate of conscience; and that their minds were fully made up not to make a division. Upon both these latter points his charity was soon obliged to give up the ghost.

He was astonished when he was assured that the dissentients had an organ in one of their chapels near Leeds. By way of apology for this piece of inconsistency, he was informed that the organ at Brunswick was opposed, not on its own account merely, but because it was viewed as the precursor of the liturgy. By and by the Protestants' yearly meeting was held, and the new code of laws was issued with the stamp of their legislative authority. It was soon whispered, that they had granted to their London friends the use of the liturgy!

The author was very much stunned with the sound of the organ at Burley ; but he was not prepared to give his assent to this report : he thought that even impudence must have some limits ; and that they could not go quite so far as to make a conscientious dread of the liturgy a pretence for their separation, and immediately enact its use in their own communion. A sight of the rules, however, instantly banished all delusion ; and the fact is now in black and white, that they have adopted the liturgy as well as the organ—the two terrible scare-crows which frightened them from the old connexion.

Their rules will give a practical illustration of the credit due to their other professions. They affected to be mightily in love with the laws of Methodism, and wanted nothing more of the Conference than a strict observance of them ; and in framing their own code, they professed to take Mr. Wesley as a guide. It was naturally expected from such declarations, that the power would remain with the travelling preachers, only guarded against abuse by some efficient checks. Instead of this, however, they have stripped their itinerants of every particle of power, both legislative and executive, and modestly assumed to themselves, as will be shown in this pamphlet, much greater prerogatives than the Conference preachers ever claimed ; not allowing the people any means of redress, in cases of mal-administration. The secret is now out, and the mystery explained. No one can doubt that what they have done to their own ministers, they wished to do to ours. Their aim was to govern the preachers, and trample them under foot ; and now that they can be gratified in this matter, in their own connexion, their consciences no longer boggle at organs or liturgies ; both missionaries and people are welcome to flutes and forms of prayer, if they will but patiently wear their fetters. The writer respects conscience, even in its wanderings, and reverences it when under the direction of divine truth ; but he abominates, from the depths of

his soul, the man who under its guise is aiming at his own aggrandizement.

Many more particulars in the rules and conduct of the faction deserve exposure, if leisure could be found for it. In preparing this letter for the press, the writer could seldom devote more than fifteen minutes to it without interruption; but when he considers how he was imposed upon by their hypocrisy; how his name has been abused, as though he were favourable to their proceedings; and how many precious souls have been led astray by their impious libels on his brethren, generally, in that vile repository of falsehood and malignity, the Protestant Magazine; he thinks it due to himself, and to the church of Christ, to testify his abhorrence of their principles, and to show that they are fighting against God's word, as well as against his ministers.

LETTER I.

The Rules of the Protestant Methodists brought to the Test of Holy Scripture, in a letter addressed to the Private Members of that Community.

RESPECTED FRIENDS,

It is not my intention to enter largely into the dispute which occasioned your secession from what you call the "Conference Connexion." Till something like plausible answers shall be given to the productions of Messrs. Watson, Welsh, and Beecham, little more on that side of the question seems to be wanted. But as your rulers have framed a new ecclesiastical constitution, called the attention of our people to it, and invited them to participate in your glorious liberty; you cannot, I hope, be offended that I should lay before you the result of my investigation of it. When I read that your new code was to be framed "in accordance with the usages of the New Testament, and as consistent

as possible with the original rules of the late Rev. John Wesley,"* I felt quite certain that these guides had not drawn you from us, and that if you would follow them, you would soon return to us. I shall try your rules by your own test.

In an article which appeared in your Magazine for August and September last, "The employment of, and provision for, itinerant ministers, evangelists, or missionaries," is discussed; and the writer, Mr. Tucker, shows very clearly that both the New Testament, and Mr. Wesley's rules, recognise such a class of officers in the church of Christ. Your yearly meeting accordingly "resolved, that it is the opinion of this meeting, that the time has now arrived when we should employ missionaries in promoting the work of God amongst us."† These missionaries are to be entirely devoted to the ministry, and to be supported by the people. So far, well. Mr. Tucker considers the terms, itinerant ministers, evangelists, and missionaries, as synonymous; and so must your people, generally: for as missionaries are not once mentioned in the New Testament, if the word did not mean the same as itinerant ministers, or evangelists, you would stand chargeable with appointing an order of officers not recognised by the christian revelation. I shall, therefore, in the following remarks, use these terms interchangeably, as of similar import. You have also an order of officers denominated elders; and I take it for granted that you wish them to be considered as answering to the elders of the New Testament. So far you agree with the Bible.

The next point of inquiry shall be, which of these two orders has precedence in the word? Here we shall find you directly opposed to the sacred records. Timothy was an evangelist; and in the discharge of the duties of this office, he was to make full proof of his ministry. (2 Timothy iv. 5.) The connexion of the passage deserves your serious consideration: "I charge

* Rules, p. 4. † Mag. for Sept., p. 348.

thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom,—preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” Every religious teacher was not an evangelist; for the two are distinguished, and the teacher placed last. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” (Ephes. iv. 11, 12.) The apostles and prophets were extraordinary officers, and of temporary standing in the church; highly useful, and even necessary, while the cause of Christ was in a state of infancy; but not required after it had attained to a good degree of maturity. The office of evangelist must be permanent, at least so long as a soul on earth shall need evangelising. Of these permanent officers, then, the evangelist stands first.

Upon the subject of power, your laws are a direct contradiction of the New Testament. 1. Your missionaries, or evangelists, cannot, by virtue of their office, without asking leave of their masters, the elders, administer baptism; for “the elders, and such preachers as they may appoint, shall be requested to perform this rite.” They are in the same predicament with regard to the Lord’s supper; for “where it shall be determined to administer this ordinance, the leaders’ meeting shall fix the time and place for its administration, and the elders, or such preachers as they may appoint, shall be requested to perform this duty.”* 2. They cannot admit persons into society; for this is

* Mag. for Nov., p. 349.

done by the leaders' meeting, or where there is but one leader, by him and the private members.* 3. They cannot expel improper members; for this is done by the same authority by which they were admitted.† 4. They cannot appoint elders. "They shall be elected by the quarterly meeting, which shall also appoint one of them to be the presiding elder."‡ 5. They cannot sit in judgment on elders, and expel them for their sins. Nor can I find, on a careful inspection of your rules, that there is any authority in your connexion to try these consequential gentlemen for any faults they may commit, as elders. But the missionaries are subjected to a committee, consisting principally of elders, who "shall be authorised to call out and employ such missionary candidates as they may approve, and as the state of the funds, and calls for assistance, may justify."§ 6. They cannot restore a penitent elder, supposing he were expelled the society for his faults; since we have seen that the missionaries are subject to the elders, and not the elders to the missionaries. 7. They cannot appoint deacons, or poor stewards; for these are "to be chosen by the leaders' meeting."|| 8. They cannot appoint others to the office of missionaries, as I have already shown this is done by a committee consisting principally of elders. 9. They cannot exercise any control over the funds of the society. "They shall have no power to have any individual control over the funds of any society."¶ 10. They cannot either make or execute laws, or perform a single act of discipline, by virtue of their office as missionaries, or evangelists. They cannot attend the yearly meeting, which is the legislative assembly, without an order from their masters, the missionary committee, and this committee cannot send to it more than three; and they are not required to send one. The words of the law upon this subject are, "Not more than three mis-

* Rules, p. 11.
for Nov., p. 348.

† Ibid, p. 12.
|| Rules, p. 19.

‡ Ibid, p. 13. § Mag.
¶ Mag. for Nov., p. 348.

sionaries to be sent by the missionary committee.”* It would be idle, therefore, to talk of their possessing any legislative authority; for the law seems evidently to have been made with a special view to prevent it. They cannot preside in any meeting: “The presiding elder when present, shall be the chairman of all quarterly meetings, preachers’ and leaders’ meetings.† Missionaries shall not be eligible for the office of presiding elder in any circuit.”‡ This latter rule was unquestionably intended to prevent them, by virtue of their office, from taking the chair in any meeting. They have no authority, as missionaries, “to make the preachers’ plans, and see that the appointments be punctually fulfilled; to renew the tickets at the quarterly visitation of the classes; to meet the societies; to address the new members;” or “to settle” any “personal disputes and minor differences betwixt members of the society;” for “all” these things are expressed as belonging to “the duties of elders.”§ Here are christian missionaries for you! so completely stripped of all power by these lordly elders, that they have not authority to settle even a minor difference betwixt members of the society!

Such is the degraded condition of the missionaries, or evangelists, in your connexion. Let us now inquire into the prerogatives of the evangelists of holy writ. We have seen that they are placed in the first rank of permanent officers. Your evangelists are subject to the elders; the elders were subject to the evangelist Timothy, who had authority to try them, and if found guilty, to depose them; and it belonged to him to restore them after they had given proof of repentance. All this is plain from 1 Timothy v. 19—22: “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that

* Mag. for Nov., p. 349.
Nov., p. 348.

† Rules, p. 14.

‡ Mag. for

§ Rules, p. 13.

thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins : keep thyself pure." Here it is worthy of notice, 1. That if two or three witnesses lodged a complaint against an elder before an evangelist, he was authorised to entertain it, and to try the cause. If the charge were proved, the evangelist, as judge, pronounced sentence : "Them that sin rebuke before all." If your elders sin, your evangelists have no power to try and judge them.

2. This authority the evangelist derives from Christ, as an essential part of his office ; and to Christ he is responsible for the due exercise of it. Hence it is added, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things." This is one of the most solemn and awful charges to be found in the Bible, and makes it the imperative and indispensable duty of every evangelist to pay a most strict and conscientious attention to this branch of his office ; and those who dare to deprive him of it, and the evangelist who has the meanness and impiety to resign it, must answer for it at the last day, in the presence of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels.

3. Why was Timothy to be so unbending in the impartial and strict exercise of discipline ? The apostle says, "That others also may fear." This shows that in those days it was not put to the vote, in an assembly of elders, what punishment should be awarded to an offending brother ; for the elders were not likely to be afraid of a censure inflicted by themselves. The guilt was to be clearly proved by the testimony of "two or three witnesses ;" but when this was done, the evangelist of his own discretion was to mete out a punishment proportioned to the offence, and the best adapted to inspire the other elders with a fear of sinning. Now in such a case as this, suppose a few ignorant and hardened elders in the church, and how would the thing work ? What is intended to intimidate, if it fail

of its purpose, will provoke opposition. Those gentlemen, then, who were not moved with fear, would resist, and the demagogues would spout away in something like the following style: "Men of Israel help! This beardless youth who has lately come amongst us, and who has been treated by us with the greatest kindness, and supported in the most liberal manner, is acting the tyrant, and trying to govern, as all tyrants do, by working upon our fears. Are we to submit to this state of vassalage, and to be treated like slaves, because this is the will and pleasure of a lad just out of petticoats? We protest against such outrageous conduct, and we call upon all christians who value their religious liberties, to unite with us in protesting against this impudent attempt to deprive us of the privilege of being tried by our peers."

4. The punishment, in the passage under consideration, was excision; because it is added, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." I am aware that many understand this text as referring to an ordination to the ministry; but I have shown in my book on Ecclesiastical Claims, that it refers to a restoration to the eldership.* As that book was published fifteen years ago, my opinion on the passage could not be founded on any bias in relation to the present controversy. The apostle was treating here, not on the appointment of officers, but on their punishment. He had exhorted Timothy fearlessly to chastise the guilty; and now he cautions him against a sudden restoration, (which was performed by the imposition of hands,) lest the discipline of the church should be despised; in which case others would venture to sin, and Timothy would become a partaker of it. Your evangelists can exercise no discretion as to the continuance of church censures, and have no more authority to take them off, than to lay them on.

Titus was an officer in the primitive church, similar

* Pages 140, 141.

to Timothy. He was cautioned by the apostle to preach "sound doctrine," and to "speak, exhort, and rebuke with all authority." (Titus ii. 1, 15.) He was an itinerant minister. The apostle left him in Crete to regulate the affairs of the churches, and informed him that a successor would be sent by and by, and that his services would be wanted at Nicopolis. (Tit. i. 5; iii. 12.) And we learn from the epistles that he was much employed, like Timothy, in visiting and settling the churches. As both were devoted to the same work, they were undoubtedly officers of the same rank. Titus was directed to appoint elders. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." (Tit. i. 5.) Timothy had a similar power; for after the apostle had described the qualifications of a bishop or elder, and deacon, he remarks, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. iii. 14, 15.) As the description of the qualifications of elders and deacons was given to direct the conduct of Timothy in the church, in case the apostle should delay his visit, it is evident that the choice and appointment of the candidates rested with the evangelist. But though both Timothy and Titus had authority to appoint elders, the evangelists of our Protestants, instead of appointing them, are appointed by them,—no solitary instance of which can be found in the New Testament. As you have no officers denominated deacons, I presume your poor stewards, like ours, are intended to perform the same duties as the deacons of holy writ. But your poor stewards are not appointed by the travelling preachers, or evangelists, but "by the leaders' meeting."

The evangelist Titus had authority to expel improper members. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he

that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." (Titus iii. 10, 11.) The Protestant evangelists have no authority to expel a wicked person; in the large societies, this is done by the leaders' meeting, and in the small, by an elder in conjunction with a majority of the class; so that a travelling preacher has no voice in the affair at all!

The evangelists had a power to elect others as their co-adjutors and successors. Timothy and Titus, and many other evangelists, were chosen by the apostles; not by a committee of elders, as yours are. But as the apostles could not continue by reason of death, and as they appointed evangelists to assist them in founding and governing the churches, it was a matter of importance to know how these things were to be managed when the apostles should be taken to their reward. Upon this subject St. Paul instructed Timothy: "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2.) This shows that the evangelical office was to be perpetuated in the church, and to be conferred by evangelists. Here the Protestants are outrageous against us for following the scripture plan.

In Acts xxi. 8, we read of "Philip, the evangelist, which was one of the seven." We have an account of his doings in Acts viii.: "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Now read over the chapter, and try if you can find out what committee of elders sent him on this errand; and what elders, or persons deputed by them, performed the rite of baptism. It does not appear from the narrative, that Philip had a companion, or that there was a christian in Samaria prior to his preaching, and certainly not a church; there was, therefore, no other person to give the sacred rite. And towards the end of the chapter we read of Philip baptizing the eunuch,

Suppose one of your evangelists had been in Philip's place when the eunuch requested the ordinance, he must have replied, I can do nothing in the business; it belongs to my masters the elders.

But it must not be forgotten, that in the primitive times, baptism was the rite of initiation into the church. This is apparent from Acts ii. 41, 42: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." And we never read in any part of the New Testament of any other mode of admission. Philip, therefore, by baptizing the Samaritans, received them into the church; or, as we term it, into society: and he did all this of the authority which Christ had given him; for there was neither leader, nor elder, nor local preacher, to debate the matter with him. Your evangelists have no official authority to admit any one into society.

Your legislators have decreed, we have seen, that "missionaries shall not have any individual control over the funds of any society." Instead of this being the case with the evangelists of the Bible, the direct contrary was the truth. Philip the evangelist is said to be "one of the seven;" evidently referring to Acts vi., where we find him among the seven appointed by the apostles to manage the fund for the relief of the poor. It is equally plain that Timothy was directed to exercise control over the fund for the support of poor widows at Ephesus. (1 Tim. v. 3, 16.) These are the only persons who are expressly called evangelists in the New Testament; and it turns out that they both had "control over the funds of the society." So we find the apostle giving orders respecting a collection through a whole province, and intending to receive the money himself, and to disburse it. (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) Here again, therefore, your laws are as flatly opposed to scripture, as an infidel could make them.

In fact, if your law-makers had studied to contra-

dict the Bible, they could not have done it more effectually. Your evangelists have no official authority to execute the smallest portion of the church's discipline. Whereas the evangelists of sacred writ were entrusted with the whole of it. Titus was left in Crete, to "set in order the things that were wanting;" which words contain a warrant, not only to ordain officers, which he is immediately directed to do, but also to perform any act of discipline, which, according to his judgment, might be necessary for the perfection of the external order of the churches. To the discretion of your evangelists nothing is left; to the discretion of the New Testament evangelists everything was intrusted. A more perfect contrast cannot be drawn.

Under cover of protesting against the itinerant ministers amongst us, your leaders are, in fact, protesting against the word of God. To represent this matter in its true light, I will set down in one column the powers of scripture evangelists, and show in the other, who exercise these powers in your connexion.

"ITINERANT MINISTERS, EVANGELISTS, OR MISSIONARIES,"
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

PROTESTANT METHODISTS.

1. Were in the first rank of permanent officers. (Ephes. iv. 11, 12.)

2. Administered baptism, independent of elders. (Acts viii. 12—38.)

3. Admitted candidates into society. (Acts ii. 41, 42; viii. 12, compared.)

4. Expelled improper persons. (Titus iii. 10, 11.)

1. Protest against it, and place them last. See the rules generally, as quoted above.

2. Protest against it. Only elders, and those they in their wisdom appoint, may administer the ordinance. (Mag. for Nov., p. 349.)

3. Protest against it. The Leaders' meeting, or, where there is none, an elder, the leader and members of the class, admit members. (Rules, p. 11.)

4. Protest against it. The power of expulsion being in those who admit. (Rules, p. 12.)

5. Appointed elders. (1 Tim. iii. 1—15; Titus i. 5.)

6. Tried and judged elders. (1 Tim. v. 19—22.)

7. At their discretion restored those elders to communion who had been expelled. (1 Tim. v. 22.)

8. Appointed deacons, or poor stewards. (1 Tim. iii. 8—10.)

9. Appointed others to the evangelical office. (2 Tim. ii. 2.)

10. Had control over the funds of the society. (Acts vi. 5; 1 Tim. v. 3—16.)

11. Had the power to order and settle everything in the churches, both as regards the appointment of officers, and the removal of abuses. (Titus i. 5.)

5. Protest against it. The appointment being in the quarterly meeting. (Rules, p. 13.)

6. Protest against it vehemently. The rules are prudently silent, as to any tribunal before which elders, as such, may be arraigned.

7. Have no rules respecting the restoration of an elder, but their spirit and design loudly protest against his restoration being left to the discretion of a missionary.

8. Protest against it; the appointment being in the presiding elder and the leaders' meeting. (Rules, p. 19.)

9. Protest against it, and have transferred the power to a missionary committee, consisting of elders and others. (Mag. for Nov., p. 348.)

10. Protest against it, and place the control in the hands of the presiding elder, and the leaders' meeting. (Mag. for Nov., p. 348; Rules, p. 20.)

11. Protest against it. The evangelists, as such, have no power of admission or expulsion, as regards the meanest officers, or the private members; nor can they perform a single act of discipline: the power to do these things being lodged in other hands. (See the rules at large.)*

* There is a rule which states that "missionaries shall be entitled to attend all meetings of which elders are members; they shall be subject to the same rules as the preachers, but as missionaries they shall not be eligible for the office of presiding elder in any circuit." A querist addressed a letter to the editor of the Magazine, which is inserted in the number for December last, in which he inquires, "Are missionaries intended to be official and voting members of 'all meetings of which elders are members?'" The editor, in reply, states it as his opinion, "That it is fully intended that the missionaries shall be constituted official

Let us now inquire, as Mr. Wesley was to be their guide, next to the apostles, whether they have paid

members of all meetings of which the elders are members; and, consequently entitled to vote therein." This is a singular construction of the rule. Is there no difference between being entitled to attend a meeting, and being a full member of it? How many are entitled to attend parliament, who are not allowed to take any part in its proceedings? Is not every one who pleases entitled to attend the assizes? But if all who attend were to claim a right to sit on the bench, or in the jury box, and to give a vote on the fate of the prisoner, would they not be soon taught another lesson? What is more common than for persons to be allowed to attend meetings of which they are not members, and in which they are not allowed either to speak or vote? If it were the intention of the legislators to be understood that missionaries shall be elders, how easy it would have been to say so. But instead of that, it is immediately added, "They shall be subject to the same rules as the preachers." This seems evidently intended to prevent such a construction of the rule as the editor has given; for if he were correct, the rule would, no doubt, have stated, "They shall be subject to the same rules as the elders;" for a man must be subject to the rules of the body of which he is a member. Though all your elders are preachers, and therefore subject to the preachers' rules; yet all the preachers are not elders, and, consequently, are not obliged to conform to the elders' rules. But though the missionaries are subject to the same rules as the preachers, they are not entitled to the same privileges. The local preachers of each circuit may elect one of their body to be a member of the yearly meeting; and "in places where the number of members in a circuit shall exceed one thousand, two preachers may be sent from the preachers' meeting." But they cannot send a missionary to the yearly meeting, since his attendance depends upon the missionary committee. (Mag. for Nov., p. 348, 349.)

The rule which immediately follows the preceeding is worded thus: "They," the missionaries, "shall have no power to alter or dispense with any law or rule of the connexion; nor to establish any new law, rule, or custom, in either the discipline or mode of worship of the connexion; nor to have any individual control over the funds of the society, but in all things they shall be as fully under the government of the existing laws and regulations of the connexion as any other member thereof." Upon this law the querist asks, "Does it deprive missionaries of voting in the quarterly or yearly meetings, upon questions involving the altering or dispensing with, any law or rule of the connexion, or the establishing of any new law, rule, or custom, either in the discipline or mode of worship in the connexion, which those meetings may be competent to enact, authorise, or adopt?" The editor replies in

more respect to him than to the sacred writers ! And
1. The evangelists, or travelling ministers, instead of

the negative ; and assures us, that the rule "merely prohibits their assuming an unconstitutional authority to do any of these things, by their own exclusive power." As to the quarterly meeting, we may leave that out of the discussion, because it can only propose to the yearly meeting ; it can enact nothing. The editor is most certainly mistaken. The rule says expressly, "They shall have no power" to repeal or enact laws relating to either discipline or worship ; and this cannot mean, "They shall have no individual, or exclusive power ;" because the word individual is introduced into the middle of the rule, after they are stripped of all power to legislate respecting discipline or worship, and is applied to the funds only. If it were intended that they should possess no individual power to make or repeal laws merely, the word individual, ought to have been connected with no power, at the beginning of the rule ; its being placed in the middle shows it was not forgotten, and that it has no connexion with legislative power. But when we have proved that "no power," does not mean, "no exclusive power," there is only another sense of which the words are susceptible, and that is, "no joint power ;" and when a man has no power of himself, or conjointly with others, he has no power at all.

This interpretation agrees with other rules. Your laws must all be made at the yearly meeting ; and you have one, already quoted, in which the admission of missionaries to the legislative assembly depends upon the will of the missionary committee, who cannot send more than three, and are not obliged to send one, to this meeting of sapients. Now, if I have no power to take a seat in the legislature, I have no power, either individually or conjointly, to make laws. If it be said that a missionary may be sent, if the committee please, I ask, and what then ? does it follow that he has a power, in connexion with others, to make laws, because he may become a legislator if he curry favour with his superiors ? Then I possess a power, in concert with others, to make laws for this country ; for I may be sent to parliament, if some gentleman will but give me an estate of £300. per annum, as a qualification, and favour me with his interest in a borough where he is lord paramount : and I think I should find it easier to get into parliament, than, were I one of your missionaries, to get into your yearly meeting. In this way of arguing, I possess a power of legislating for Greece ; for I may become sovereign of that country, if the king-makers will but place me upon the throne ! But how, in the name of common sense, can any body of men possess legislative authority, when they may all be legally kept out of the legislative assembly !

The editor seems to be ashamed of these rules ; and well he may :

being the lowest officers in the Methodist societies, as they are amongst the Protestants, were always, like those of the Bible, in the first rank: we, therefore, protest against the order of our accusers.

2. Our preachers follow the example of the evangelists of holy writ, and administer baptism as a duty connected with their office; and we protest against the transfer of this authority by the Protestants to their elders.

3. Our itinerants, following Bible precedents, admit candidates into society. As Peter, however, in reference to the admission into the church, by baptism, of Cornelius, and his family and friends, asked, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?" and would, no doubt, had any just cause been

but his attempts to explain them away have utterly failed. And it must not be forgotten, that his opinions have no authority; the law makers have not chosen him as their expositor; and as the law is opposed to his opinions, they are of no value. Thus then the matter stands. The missionaries may attend the meetings of elders, and two or three of them may, perhaps, be allowed the mighty privilege of sitting in the yearly meeting, with their hands upon their mouths, listening in silent astonishment to the divine orations of mechanics and manufacturers! And what is the character of these missionaries? "No person shall be employed as a missionary but a preacher fully received upon the plan, and who shall have given satisfactory evidence of his attachment to the principles on which our society is founded; of fervent piety, great zeal for the glory of God, and talents calculated to make him generally accepted." This is your own account of your own men. None but the wicked can trample under foot those they confess to be so good. They do not love but fear them, and therefore, lay them under restraint; just as their predecessor behaved to the baptist. "Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy;" and then comes the tragedy—he shut him up in prison, and finished by chopping off his head. Do you not blush on account of the fetters and gags prepared for your ministers? And so these men are to be wholly devoted to their work, but not allowed to speak and vote upon sacred topics in the presence of those who are six days out of the seven employed in secular affairs. Such ministers are like muzzled bears, to be baited by every cowardly dog that delights in mischief, when he can do it in a whole skin. Shame on those who can thus debase the servants of Christ, and expose them to public contempt!

assigned, have declined giving the rite ; so our rules state, that "the leaders' meeting shall have a right to declare any person on trial, improper to be received into the society ; and, after such declaration, the superintendent shall not admit such person into the society."* But since elders are never once in the Bible represented as receiving new members, we protest against this practice of our reformers.

4. Our evangelists expel immoral members, as did Titus ; and since we never read in the Bible that elders or leaders, and private members, performed this act of discipline, we protest against their doing it, as an usurpation of another's office. We have, it is true, admitted a check on this subject, for which I can find no plain authority in the New Testament ; but as it is not opposed to anything in the sacred volume, and may have a salutary effect, I do not object to it. I refer to this rule : "No person shall be expelled from the society for immorality, till such immorality be proved at a leaders' meeting."† The word *at*, in this rule, has been the subject of much cavil by our opponents. They would claim for the leaders' meeting the power of expulsion ; but as that power is never in scripture exercised by leaders or elders, the Conference dare not concede so much. The rule was professedly made to prevent "clandestine expulsions ;" and the Conference very properly remark upon it, that "that superintendent would be bold indeed, who would act with partiality or injustice in the presence of the whole meeting of leaders. Such a superintendent, we trust, we have not among us : and if such there ever should be, we should be ready to do all possible justice to our injured brethren."‡

5. It has been proved at large, in "Ecclesiastical Claims," that our leaders answer to the elders of the Bible. Timothy and Titus appointed elders ; and our itinerant preachers have always done the same ; and as

* Minutes, vol. i., p. 375.

† Minutes, vol. i., p. 375.

‡ Minutes, vol. i., p. 377.

the power of appointment is vested by the Protestants in the quarterly meeting, in which an elder presides, we protest against their practice, and abide by the scripture. We allow, indeed, on the nomination of a leader by the preacher, a veto to the leaders' meeting, for which we cannot find any express authority in the New Testament; yet since none but he can nominate, and induct into office, the substance of the primitive practice is preserved.

6. The evangelists of the Bible tried and judged elders; and in this we follow their example; and we protest against the Protestants for departing from this scriptural order.

7. The evangelist Timothy was empowered by the apostle to restore repentant elders, and our evangelists do the same, conceding a negative to the leaders' meeting, as in the case of their first appointment. As the missionaries of the Protestants are entirely divested of this power, we protest against the robbery.

8. The appointment of deacons, or poor stewards, belonged to the evangelists, according to the New Testament. This is the case with us; the leaders' meeting having a veto on the nominee. The Protestant evangelists have nothing to do in this affair, and we protest against the transfer into other hands.

9. The primitive evangelists had the appointment of others to their own office; and so have ours. A candidate amongst us, however, must have the approbation of the quarterly meeting, before he can be proposed to our evangelists as fit for the office; but the Conference have the power to accept or reject him, as they judge proper. Whilst the appointment, therefore, is with the travelling ministers, his character and qualifications are submitted to the scrutiny of all the principal local officers in the circuit where he resides; so that a bad man cannot become an itinerant with us, without the recommendation of the people. The purity of our ministry is entrusted to their guardianship, and if they recommend wolves instead of shepherds, they

are responsible for the mischief which follows, and ought to take the shame and blame to themselves.* In

* As a man unfit for the situation cannot become, so neither can he continue, an itinerant amongst us, without a criminal connivance on the part of the people. They have the power of dismissing any preacher from their circuit, with whose character and qualifications they may be dissatisfied; for thus it is enacted, "If the majority of the trustees, or the majority of the stewards and leaders of any society, believe that any preacher appointed for their circuit, is immoral, erroneous in doctrines, deficient in abilities, or that he has broken any of the rules of pacification, they shall have authority to summon the preachers of the district, and all the trustees, stewards, and leaders of the circuit, to meet in their chapel on a day and hour appointed. The chairman of the district shall be president of the assembly; and every preacher, trustee, steward, and leader, shall have a single vote. And if a majority of the meeting judge that the accused preacher is immoral, erroneous in doctrines, deficient in abilities, or has broken any of the rules above mentioned, he shall be considered as removed from that circuit." (Min., vol. i., pp. 323, 324.) The local officers, in such a case, will form a triumphant majority, should all the preachers vote in favour of the culprit; any circuit, therefore, can rid itself of a preacher who does not conduct himself with propriety.

And here I will take occasion to notice, the difference between our chief officers and those of the Protestants, as to the mode of their trial, the special directions how it is to be managed, and the punishment which may be inflicted. I have just mentioned a tribunal to which ours are amenable, and where the people can do themselves ample justice. No law was ever penned with greater precision. Another way of trial is before the preachers of the district only. "The chairman shall have authority to call a meeting of the committee of his district, on any application of the preachers or people, which appears to him to require it. He shall send an exact account of the complaint in writing to the person accused, with the name of the accuser or accusers, before he calls a meeting of the district committee to examine into the charge. If it appear on just grounds to any superintendent, that the chairman of his district has been guilty of any crime or misdemeanor, or that he has neglected to call a meeting of the district committee, when there were sufficient reasons for calling it, such superintendent shall have authority, in that case, to call a meeting of the district committee, and to fix the time and place of meeting. The committee thus assembled, shall have power, if they judge necessary, to try the chairman, and, if found guilty, to suspend him from being a travelling preacher till the ensuing con-

the Protestant connexion the evangelists have nothing whatever to do with the appointment of their co-ad-

ference, or to remove him from the office of a superintendent, or to depose him from the chair, and to elect another in his place." (Min., vol. i., p. 259.) There is a third mode of trying a preacher, when the parties are of opinion that the case does not require so large an assembly to determine it, as either of the preceding. "If a preacher be accused of immorality, the preacher accused, and his accuser, shall respectively choose two preachers of their district; and the chairman of the district shall, with the four preachers chosen as above, try the accused preacher; and they shall have authority, if he be found guilty, to suspend him till the ensuing conference, if they judge it expedient. The chairman shall have a casting voice, in case of an equality." (Min., vol. i., p. 277.) In addition to all these, an accused preacher may be tried before the conference. These laws are as definite as any person can desire; and a child cannot misunderstand them.

Now compare the above with the Protestant rules, in reference to the trial of elders. As they have raised such a dreadful outcry against the abuse of power by our preachers, the difficulty of bringing them to justice, and the natural tendency of power to corrupt its possessor; I concluded that, when they had raised their elders to the supremacy, they would have watched them with peculiar jealousy, and carefully instructed the subordinate authorities how to deal with a lordly elder. But though their rules contain particular directions respecting the trial of a private member, a local preacher, and a leader; and have given a committee authority to bandy about at pleasure a missionary; yet they have not said one word how an elder, as such, is to be tried; although they have more rules respecting elders, than any other class of persons amongst them. We should not have suspected that these gentlemen were considered as peccable, had it not been for the intimation contained in the following rule: "All charges intended to be preferred against any member of society, must be sent in writing to the presiding elder; but in case he should be the person accused or implicated, to any other elder; who shall give one week's notice also, in writing, of the time and place of trial, to the person accused, with a list of the charges, and the name of the individual by whom they will be preferred." I can find nothing more in the rules applicable to such a case, except the following may be thought to have a bearing upon it: "In all cases of trial, the elders shall have power to summon before the proper tribunals, all disputing parties, accused persons, and the necessary witnesses." (Rules, p. 14.) The question in this case is, what is the "proper tribunal" for the trial of an elder? Upon this point the rules are silent. In all the other cases of trial, the tribunal

jutors or successors; this being referred to a committee of local officers;—against this we protest.

before which it is to take place is particularly noted; but in the instance under consideration it is omitted! This cannot be accidental. Here is the judge, the accused, the accuser; but no one to bring in a verdict; the elder must, therefore, necessarily escape. I should like to know what hand the elders had in drawing up this marvellous scheme of church policy; the mystery of this affair might then be explained!

Compare this with the particularity of our rules respecting the trial of preachers, and even the chairmen of districts; contrast the openness of the one with the Jesuitry of the other, and no person can be at a loss to determine which shows the face of a christian.

If it be said that, since a leaders' meeting may try a leader, and a preachers' meeting a preacher, so a meeting of elders may try an elder, I ask, how is the thing to be done where there are but two or three elders? One must preside as judge, another is the party accused, the third may be the accuser; and then there is no jury! If there were four elders, the jury would consist but of one person, a thing never heard of before in English story. The rule respecting the number of elders is this: "The number of elders shall be regulated by the largeness of the society, and the work to be done. In Leeds, seven are deemed a proper number." (Rules, p. 13.) The number of members in the circuits at the time this law was made, is thus stated in the Magazine for November following: namely, "Leeds, 1553; Barnsley, 445; Preston, 253; York, 120; Newark, 47; Walls-end, 62." If seven be deemed a proper number for Leeds, and the number for the other circuits, as the law directs, "be regulated by the largeness of the societies," then there is not a circuit besides Leeds entitled to three. It would be nonsense in the extreme, in this state of things, to talk of elders trying elders. Besides, the trial by peers is not an acknowledged principle of the connexion. The missionaries and private members, are deprived of the privilege; the elders, therefore, cannot try one another, without the authority of an express law.

Nor will it help the cause to say, that, as "elders must be preachers," they may be tried by a preachers' meeting; for this meeting can only take cognizance of offences against its own rules: the preachers can only try a person as a preacher for transgressing the preachers' laws; not as an elder, for violating the laws of the eldership. The same person may be both a preacher and a leader; but no one pretends that he can be tried in the leaders' meeting for the neglect of his duties as a preacher. And so after all the hubbub which has been raised against us, as pa-

10. Our evangelists have, as those of the New Testament had, control over the funds of the society. We have associated with us, however, in the management of them, many of our respectable friends, who cheerfully take upon themselves the chief of the labour : so that the preachers have little more to do than to exercise a general superintendence, which does not interfere with their spiritual duties. Thus, we have society stewards for the management of the society's fund, poor stewards for the poor fund, and circuit stewards for the circuit fund. As committees, and collectors, our people have the chief care of the missionary fund, school fund, chapel fund, etc. As to the auxiliary fund, we think that we know the wants of superannuated preachers, preachers' widows, and children, better than other persons do, and, therefore, do not need their assistance in disbursing this money. By the annual reports, however, the subscribers may see how their money is disposed of. The legal fund is for the maintenance of worn-out preachers and their families, and supported principally by our own subscriptions ; and others have no more right of interference with it than with the fund of any other annuitant society. The pretended right of our small friends to meddle with the profits of the book-room, has always appeared to me preposterous ; as though attention to the duties of the ministry actually deprived preachers of common sense, in relation to the ordinary affairs of life. The sale of religious publications is not inconsistent with their office ; and they have as much right to the fair gains they make, as any man has to the

pists, and tyrants, they have no sooner deprived the evangelists of all power, than they assume to themselves prerogatives, which even the papists have denied to the pope, with all his infallibility ; for the council of Constance not only decreed, that a general council has authority to depose a pope, but they acted upon it. I will, however, defy the most artful Protestants to show from their rules how a presiding elder may be deposed. I wonder the words popery and tyranny, which these men are perpetually bawling out against us, do not stick in their throats and choke them !

profits of his business ; and their devoting thousands a year from this concern to the extension of the work of God among us, entitles them to the thanks of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. I wonder it was never seriously proposed, in this age of marvels, to appoint preacher stewards, whose business it should be to take charge of the preachers' salary, and to dispose of it for them, that their heavenly meditations might not be disturbed with the intrusion of such earthly vanities. If this scheme were adopted, radical stewards would soon reduce them to jail allowance for the belly ; and for their filthy lucre, would furnish them with filthy rags, for the back. The Protestants have deprived their missionaries of all control over their funds, and transferred it to the presiding elder and others. As this has been proved to be contrary to Scripture, we protest against it.

11. The whole discipline of churches where evangelists resided, as in the instances of Timothy at Ephesus, and Titus at Crete, was administered by them. The same is observed in our connexion, which, however, has provided numerous and powerful checks against the abuse of this authority. Your governors have stripped your missionaries of every vestige of power, in direct opposition to the word of God ; on which account we protest against it.

I now call upon you, and all impartial men, to decide between us and our accusers, as to which has the sanction of holy scripture. Every man whose conscience is not seared as with a hot iron, will pay some respect to the sacred records. Here we fearlessly meet the reformers. In every instance, in the preceding examination, where there is an apparent want of conformity in our discipline to the word of God, the deviation is a concession made to subordinate officers. It may be proved, however, I think, that these concessions have not been carried so far as to be irreconcilable with the spirit of the texts referred to ; though they strike me as going to the extreme point of consistency. But till our opponents accuse us of conceding too much, which

will probably be the next subject of their clamour against us, I do not deem it necessary to enter on a justification of the sacrifices we have made for the sake of peace.

You will now know how to estimate the professions of your ecclesiastical legislators, about being guided by Mr. Wesley and the apostles. They knew that many of those whom they had seduced from Methodism were warmly attached to the Bible, and revered the memory of our father in the gospel; it was therefore, necessary, in order to lull suspicion to sleep, to talk loudly about pure Methodism, and pure christianity. It was pretended that nothing more was designed than to protest against the abuses of Methodism, and to reform them, in order that our connexion might be restored to its primitive standard of excellency, and to an exact conformity with the platform of government laid down in the New Testament. The fact is, however, that they have outraged every law of Methodism, both ancient and modern, and paid no more attention to the Bible than to an old almanac. And if we are to judge of men's intentions by what they do, rather than by what they say, we are irresistibly brought to the conclusion, that the agitators in this revolt, belied their consciences in their professions, practised a foul deception on the simple souls who yielded to their guidance, and in reality cared no more for Paul and Wesley, than for the Conference preachers. They have usurped the authority of itinerant ministers, and set up themselves as the chief rulers in the church.

Your missionaries can discharge no part of the duties of their office, except preaching. They are not so much as allowed "to renew the tickets, to meet the societies," or "to address the new members who may have been admitted into the society during the preceding quarter,"—though the new converts may be the fruit of their own ministry; for these things are headed, "Duties of elders." Did ever tyranny equal this? No man who believes he is called to this office, and responsible to God for the discharge of its duties,

and who understands what its duties are, can become a missionary amongst you ; because he cannot do the work of an evangelist, if he would : he must either be extremely ignorant or else bankrupt, in character or fortune, if not in both.

Of all the publications on your side of the question, I have met with only one, Mr. Leach's pamphlet, in which it is attempted to show that the scriptures are in your favour and against us. Mr. L. has explained his theory with sufficient precision in the following words : " What I contend for is this, that the laws and usages of christian churches can only have the sanction of divine authority, when they are in accordance with the precepts and examples of scripture ; and can only be so, when they are enacted by, or with the express consent of, the whole church ; and are administered, not by a bishop, an elder, or a pastor alone, nor by a conclave or conference of such persons, but by the whole church ; or when that is impracticable, by a number of persons deputed from the whole of the members of a church, and representing fairly all their interests, and all their opinions." * In illustration of this scheme of church government, Mr. L., in commenting on the expulsion of the incestuous Corinthian, reduces the authority of the apostle Paul to a single vote ; and he allows the same to each member of the church. The phrases in the preceding extract of " the whole church," and " the whole of the members of a church," must include females as well as males, and children as well as adults ; and I have shown in " Baptism Discussed," that there were numerous young children in the churches planted by the apostles. An inspired apostle, then, had actually, according to Mr. L., just as much authority in the church, as a girl or boy of half a dozen or half a score years of age !

Mr. L. is a radical reformer with a vengeance ! What megrim will come next ?

In the Protestant legislature, " the whole church" can have no voice. " The yearly meeting," in which

* Page 16.

the laws are made, "shall consist of the presiding elder of each circuit ; a preacher from each circuit, to be chosen by the preachers' meeting : a member of the quarterly meeting, not being a preacher, to be chosen by the quarterly meeting ; and not more than three missionaries, to be sent by the missionary committee. In places where the number of members in a circuit shall exceed one thousand, two preachers and two other persons may be sent from the preachers and quarterly meetings as before directed." Not one of these, you perceive, is sent by "the whole of the members of a church." Nor have the private members much to do with the executive department of your government. I cannot find that they have a particle of power in the administration, except where, through the smallness of the society, there happens to be no leaders' meeting ; then they are allowed to vote on the admission into, and expulsion from, the society. Mr. L.'s scheme is, therefore, as much opposed to your rules as to ours ; and if his scripture authorities support his theory, they conclude as decisively against his friends as against his foes.

Mr. Leach has favoured us with his opinion on the rule of elders. "Peter says, (1 Epistle v.,) 'The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, to feed the flock of God, not as being lord's over God's heritage, but as being ensamples to the flock.' (Ver. 3.) Here is an express declaration that the pastors of the flock are not lords over them. There was danger in those days of their fancying they ought to be, but Peter removes the ground for such an opinion. But in denying to ministers [elders] the lordship over God's heritage, does Peter state or define any powers vested in them, other than the power of instructing, warning, reproving, and exhorting their flocks ? or does he allude to any methods beside these, by which they were to conduct themselves in the churches ? The marked omission of any such reference in every part of the epistles, is a certain proof that nothing of the kind was known among the primitive churches, nor in-

tended to be sanctioned by the authority of Jesus Christ. It was the assumption of later times, and one of the causes, as well as one of the proofs, that the fine gold had become dim, and the glory of primitive christianity had departed. The same effects will doubtless follow in every age, from the same causes." This is Mr. L.'s comment on the apostle Peter's exhortation to elders. He denies that they had "any powers vested in them, other than the power of instructing, warning, reproving, and exhorting their flocks;" and insists that they are not warranted to use "any methods beside these," in any part of the epistles, or "by the authority of Jesus Christ." It follows, that they ought not to exercise any of the extra prerogatives vested in them by your rules. Their assumption of such powers in these later times he ranks among the causes and proofs of the glory of primitive christianity having vanished. It is an awkward circumstance that this pamphlet came out prior to the first yearly meeting, which adopted the supremacy of elders as the chief corner stone of its babel of discipline. Mr. L. was not aware, I dare say, at the time of writing his epistle, that he was putting a rod into pickle with which we should chastise his friends.

In the Protestant Magazine for May last, Mr. Leach's pamphlet is reviewed, and lauded in no very measured terms. In his list of scripture proofs, Mr. L. first of all appeals to Acts i., where we have an account of the appointment of an apostle in the place of Judas. On this he remarks, "The appointment of the highest and most important station was vested in the whole church, and was not claimed by any, nor by all of the apostles, to the exclusion of the other members." The reviewer is quite of Mr. L.'s opinion, who says, "We think this remarkable instance of the exercise of ecclesiastical power, in that important case, is quite decisive of the fact it is adduced to prove; namely, that even the apostles themselves did not attempt to monopolize the authority requisite to put in nomination two candidates for the vacant office of an apostle; but divided that au-

thority with 'the whole church.'" If you, my friends, think so too, pray have the goodness to say what you think of the state of things in your own connexion, where your elders and other officers are so far from dividing with the "whole church" the authority to appoint your apostles, that "the whole church" is never consulted, in any way, concerning such matters. But the reviewer immediately proceeds to impeach the conduct of the apostles in the whole of this transaction. He states that, "Most certainly the appointment of an apostle in his church, rested with the Lord Jesus Christ alone; that it was not until after this appointment had taken place that the plenitude of divine inspiration was imparted to the apostles on the day of pentecost:" that "this was not the first instance of Peter's zeal transcending his wisdom prior to 'the day of pentecost;'" and that "Jesus Christ himself filled up the vacancy by the miraculous call of St. Paul to the apostleship." According to this, the whole proceeding was nullified; because the apostles, and the whole church, were guilty of invading the prerogative of Jesus Christ; their example, therefore, is to be avoided rather than imitated. No,—says our learned reviewer, "This circumstance, however, does not at all weaken the evidence of the case, in favour of Mr. L.'s argument founded thereon; for the concurrence of the whole church was unquestionably sought for by the apostles, and obtained also, in confirmation of the measure proposed by St. Peter." Reviewer! thou art beside thyself! much learning, or something else, hath made thee mad! Ordinary minds would come to the conclusion, that the concurrence of the whole church sought and obtained in an affair in which they had no right to intermeddle, but in which they usurped the authority of Christ in a point never delegated to human beings, could be no argument for the stirring of the whole church in any similar business, but a pretty strong one against it. But since the reviewer will have it, that this "important case is quite decisive of the fact it is adduced to prove," I have only to beg of

him, before he applies his case, which he is in a great hurry to do, to the ruin of our system, he would be so kind as to stop a moment, and inform us, why the officers in his own community do not divide their authority with the whole church.

The reviewer next comes to the consideration of the appointment of the seven deacons, recorded Acts vi., and observes, "In the true spirit of christian ministers, the apostle called upon the church to appoint deacons to take the entire charge of managing the temporal affairs thereof into their own hands." Why then do not your rulers call upon the whole church to appoint your deacons, or poor stewards? Why have they restricted to the leaders' meeting what they contend belongs to the whole society? You know you have never been called upon to elect a deacon.

The reviewer thinks Mr. L.'s argument from Acts xv., in favour of "the whole church" having an equality of power with the apostles, is "decisive and unanswerable." Then why do you not call your pastors and masters to account for robbing you of your privileges? They persuaded you to leave us, under the pretence that we treated you like slaves; but they promised, if you would only join them, you should be raised to an equality with the apostles! You believed them. They have taken care, however, that you shall have neither voice nor representative in the yearly meeting, where their decrees are made; and they are, no doubt, laughing at your folly in being so easily cajoled.

On 1 Corinthians v. 4, 5, Mr. Leach contends that the apostle, "So far from claiming a ministerial right to rule, only requests, as a member, to be allowed to vote by his letter or epistle." This even our reviewer cannot swallow; and he takes some pains to show that this is carrying matters rather too far.

But the reviewer is soon on friendly terms with Mr. L. again, and quite agrees with him that Hebrews xiii. 7, 17, "Is not to be understood as denoting power or authority; but leading, guiding, and ruling, in the sense of conducting a person; and not in the sense of go-

verning by authority ; a thing entirely unknown in the sacred scriptures, and not claimed, nor alluded to by any of the New Testament writers." If the passage is not to be taken "in the sense of governing by authority," are we to take it in the nonsense of governing without authority ? or is there no government in the church at all ? In your church there is government by authority to as great an extent as in ours. The reviewer adds, "Mr. L. very properly quotes Mr. Wesley, relative to the extent of the submission there required ; namely, ' Give up, not your conscience or judgment, but your own will in all things purely indifferent.' But in the Leeds case, both the consciences and judgments of nearly a thousand members, including numerous preachers, stewards, and leaders, were disregarded, opposed, and their testimony forcibly violated." I subscribe, and I can answer for my brethren that they do also, most heartily, to Mr. W.'s exposition. Did the Conference require you to give up your judgment respecting the organ ? No such thing. The Conference know that many of the preachers and people disapprove of organs ; and no one was ever required to alter his opinion respecting them. But the consciences of many were violated ! and "forcibly violated" too ! Ah, that was a sad thing indeed—to have their consciences ravished ! No virgin under the greatest alarm for her virtue ever cried out more lustily than did these poor afflicted souls at this dreadful attack upon their consciences. "The Leeds Methodists had a conscientious objection to an organ in their chapel," says Mr. Leach : "The Leeds Methodists had a conscientious objection to an organ in their chapel," is reiterated by the reviewer. In proof of this, the only organ in the circuit prior to the one set up in Brunswick chapel, was secured for their own use by these conscientious gentlemen, when their consciences forced them to separate from us. They determined they would cheer their disconsolate spirits, and animate their devotions after their escape from the oppressions they had suffered under the tyrannical Conference

preachers, by the enlivening tones of the organ at Burley; and thus afford a practical demonstration to all men how much conscience had to do with their opposition to the organ at Brunswick. What state must a man's conscience be in to qualify him to set up a plea of conscience, in such circumstances as these? Since conscience then is only a stalking horse, used by the objectors to conceal motives which they deem it prudent to keep out of sight, the matter in dispute is really in their esteem of an indifferent nature; and in this case, according to Mr. Wesley, they ought to have given up their own will; and then all the evils which followed would have been avoided. Mr. Wesley adds, what these gentlemen omit, "Whoever answers this character of a christian pastor, may undoubtedly demand this obedience."

The above remarks will show what help is afforded to your cause by Mr. L.'s appeal to the sacred scriptures. The reviewer, however, will press him into your service; and I have shown in every instance in which he has done so, that Mr L.'s views of scripture are not more opposed to our plan of discipline than to your own. But if the reviewer has not the strength, he has the heart, of a Sampson; and seems to be regardless though his own system be crushed to atoms by his mighty efforts, if he can but pull down ours.

I have not occupied my time in pointing out the awful perversions of scripture which occur in Mr. Leach's production. This has been done, and done effectually, by a reviewer in the Methodist Magazine for May last. In proof of this I appeal to two reviews of his article, which appeared in the Protestant Magazine the two following months; the first in the form of a letter from an anonymous correspondent, the second under the title of a "review." In neither of these articles is the slightest notice taken of the proofs adduced by the Methodist reviewer, that all the texts urged by Mr. Leach in support of his system are misapplied; nor is any reference made to a single text of scripture; although the professed design of Mr. L. was to show

that the word of God was hostile to our plan of discipline, and favoured his republican scheme.

This silence speaks aloud all that the most bigoted Methodist could wish. Of the passages Mr. L. produced, your reviewer attacked one, in which the principal fact referred to, he contended, had not the sanction of inspiration ; and he gave up another as obviously opposed to the inference Mr. L. drew from it ; but he stiffly contended that the other texts supported Mr. L.'s positions. But when the Methodist reviewer had commented on the whole of Mr. L.'s scripture evidence, the Protestant advocate, though professing to answer him, dare not look at a single text. A more complete victory need not be desired. But the scurrility contained in these two Protestant articles was, perhaps, never equalled ; and I only notice it, as it shows the chagrin of the writer at being so completely worsted ; for no one will give him credit for it, that he would substitute abuse in the place of argument, if he could have answered his opponent by scripture and reason. Thus then matters stand between us and you, as regards the testimony of holy writ. Your champions have ceased to appeal to the Bible in support of your cause ; and my task has been to show that the Bible speaks in our favour and against you, in the main points on which we are at issue.

I have demonstrated that God has attached many important duties and powers to the evangelical office. Whatever liberty the New Testament grants on the subject of church government, it gives no man, or body of men, authority to diminish the duties or privileges which are attached to an office by the Head of the church. Things which he has not settled are left to human prudence ; but for us to presume to alter what he has ordained, is impious ; as though we were his superiors in wisdom and authority. Of this presumption your rulers are guilty, in reducing the evangelical office nearly to a cypher.

Let us consult common sense. Will it decide, that a man who is following secular employments six days

out of seven, is better qualified to govern the church, than another is, who devotes the whole of his time to the study of religion, and the service of Christ; or must the man of business necessarily be superior in piety and virtue to him who is given up entirely to the work of the ministry?

Suppose your secular men, who have at present all the power in their hands, were released from their worldly engagements, and at liberty to consecrate their time, and talents, and energies, unreservedly to the advancement of the church's welfare, would this change in their circumstances unfit them for exercising the powers they now possess? Must they really be degraded and fettered exactly in proportion as their qualifications and opportunities for usefulness increase? To affirm this, would be the same as to say, that none but fools ought to govern.

If the history of the church through every age be examined, it will be impossible, I believe, to produce an instance, prior to the appearance of the Protestant Methodists, of a religious community having ministers wholly devoted to their work, who were divested of every particle of power. This is a new thing under the sun; and your legislators must be considered either as the most wise, or the most silly men, who have ever undertaken to illuminate mankind: I will leave the solution of this problem with you.

Suppose one of your missionaries to visit a heathen country: according to your laws he has no power to form a church, to appoint an officer, to administer the sacraments, or to do anything but preach; he might as well, therefore, stay at home. But suppose your society which sent him out should have authorised him to plant churches, I presume he would be required to constitute them on the plan of the societies at home. Here, however, would be new difficulties. He could make no elders in a new church; for "elders must be preachers;" and a heathen convert would not be fit to preach the moment after his admission into the church by baptism. But if there were no elders, there could

be no presiding elder; and then nothing could be done, since the presiding elder is at the head of everything. You have an express law that "missionaries shall not be eligible for the office of presiding elder in any circuit." You must either, therefore, dispense with this law, and indeed with most of the rest, or your missionary can make no progress in his work. In fact, you cannot employ a missionary in a strange country without allowing him to exercise all the prerogatives of a New Testament evangelist, or Conference preacher. But I suppose he must create a *posse* of Protestant officers as soon as possible; must resign his power into their hands; and, instead of instructing and governing them any longer, must beg of them to teach and guide him in the way to heaven. This looks rather queer! What an edifying spectacle it would be to see an English missionary led in strings by a troop of Hottentot elders! This would illustrate the modern cant on the march of mind; and if I were in their rear with a good rod, I would do my best to provoke them to a quick march!

But you will think, perhaps, that though the government of the church at first by missionaries might be very proper, yet, when it had attained to maturity, some alteration would be necessary. I am inclined to think, however, that it would not argue much maturity in either grace or modesty, to make the founders of churches the lackeys of their converts.

The New Testament contains an account of churches in a state of maturity, as well as in a state of infancy, without dropping a hint respecting the adoption of any such regimen as your rules prescribe. We are informed of the formation of a church at Ephesus in Acts xix., by the apostle Paul, who remained there three years. About a year after he had left them, he sent for the elders to meet him at Miletus; and they must have been rather numerous, as in his address to them, he says, "Ye all," which would not have been proper, if spoken only to two or three. It will not be disputed, I presume, that these elders were put into office by St.

Paul during his stay at Ephesus. About four years afterwards he wrote an epistle to this church, in which he speaks of evangelists, the next in order after the extraordinary officers of apostles and prophets, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The first epistle to Timothy, according to the best chronologers, was written about nine years, and the second epistle about ten years, after the church of Ephesus was planted. Nine or ten years is long enough for a church to be in its minority; in this time it may attain to a great degree of stability; and elders of this standing must be fit to take the supreme government out of the hands of the missionaries, if it were the intention of the Head of the church that they should rise to that dignity. Among the Protestants an elder is supposed to be qualified to domineer over an evangelist, as soon as he has been put into office; and it is not necessary he should be in the church long before he become an elder. "Elders must be preachers; but a person may begin to preach in a year or two after joining the society; as a preacher, he must be on probation for a year, and may then be put upon the plan; and when on the plan, he is eligible for the office of elder. Three or four years' standing in the church, then, is all that is necessary, as regards time, to raise a man above an evangelist. Eight or ten years' practice as an elder in the church of Ephesus, and two or three of them spent under the tuition of an apostle, one would think, after making some handsome allowances for the precocity of genius which distinguishes this astonishing age, would be amply sufficient to put him on an equality with a Protestant elder. But Timothy, at the time these epistles were addressed to him, was at Ephesus; and instead of a committee of elders governing him, we have seen that he exercised authority over them.

About thirty years after this, our Saviour addressed a letter, through the medium of the apostle John, to the angel of the church at Ephesus. To explain exactly what may be meant by the word angel, in this

and the other six epistles, would be rather a difficult task. A few things, however, are plain enough.

1. That the government of a church was in the hands of the angel. That this officer must have been the highest, is evident from the circumstance that he had a power to try those who came to his church with apostolical pretensions. This was a point upon which no inferior could have a right to decide ; because, if the pretensions of the stranger were valid, he would, as an apostle, exercise supreme authority during his stay ; and in order to this, he must submit his testimonials to the examination of the officer whose situation he intended to occupy. If his majesty were to send a person to supersede the governor of a colony, his credentials would not be submitted to the scrutiny of a constable, but would be presented to the governor. Now it belonged to the angel to investigate the powers of any who might come to his church in the character of apostles ; and for doing this he is highly commended by our Lord : "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." (Rev. ii. 2.) The angel of the church in Thyatira is blamed for suffering wicked people to remain in communion with him ; from which it is manifest that he had power to put them away, and ought to have done it. (Rev. ii. 20—23.) 2. The supreme power was in the hands of one person : the angel, not angels ; it was, consequently, not exercised by a committee of elders, of leaders, or local preachers.

Here let us pause for a moment. The church of Ephesus had existed about forty years when our Lord sent this epistle to its chief officer. Elders had been in it from the first ; but they are never noted as its chief rulers. If any of the primitive elders were living at this time, they must have been from sixty to eighty years of age ; and if at that time of life, after forty years' experience in the office of the eldership, they were not intrusted with supreme authority, the fact furnishes a moral certainty, that God never intended to subject his church to their sway. At the end of ten years this

church was governed by one person; at the end of forty years, and towards the close of the first century, it was still governed by one person. The church by this time was pretty well established, and its extraordinary helps were fast declining; the apostles were all dead but one, and he was tottering over the grave. If the Head of the church intended any alteration to be made in its polity, because of its altered circumstances, as this was his last revelation to it, it was the proper time to notify it. But not a word on the subject. There were abuses in some of the churches, it is true; but he left these in each church to be corrected by the angel of it, and never thought of the expedient hit upon by our Solomons, of putting all to rights by raising to the supremacy a committee of elders.*

* No sect has ever taken such liberties with the sacred writings, as the papists have done, in the framing of their church polity. And as our Protestant neighbours are perpetually charging us with being papists, without attempting to show wherein our system agrees with theirs, I will take the liberty to remind them, that they are much more nearly related than we are, to the mother of harlots.

Who is the head of the Roman church? a travelling preacher, like our president? Quite the reverse. He resembles your president, and has the cares of this world upon him, as well as the care of the churches. He is both a temporal and spiritual sovereign; and has quite as much to do with secular concerns as ecclesiastical. Thus the head of your church, like the pope, is immersed in the business of life; and neither the popish nor the Protestant head is wholly devoted to the ministry. It is the union of temporals with spirituals that has made the pope what he is. His temporal power has been increased by his spiritual, and his spiritual, by his temporal; and their mutual co-operation, acting incessantly for centuries, have made him the greatest tyrant, over both the bodies and souls of men, that ever existed. Had he been restricted to mere spirituals, he would have been comparatively a harmless animal. Your presiding elder is a pope in miniature. The child is only just born; he is sickly, and likely to die; but should he survive he will grow, and may in time become another giant grim. There was a period when a pope of Rome was not a much more important personage than a Protestant elder.

Who possess the legislative power in the Roman church? Not evangelists, nor itinerant ministers, as with us; but the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, with the pope at their head,

It will perhaps be taken for granted by the Protestants, that the angels were presiding elders. It must be

in council assembled. And three orders of officers possess this power amongst you,—elders, local preachers, and leaders, assembled in the yearly meeting; for you can scarcely have a person sent to this meeting who does not belong to one of these orders, except two or three missionaries; and I have shown that they possess no legislative power. The names of the officers in the two churches differ; but in substance they agree. The first order in each communion, means the same class of officers; among the papists they are called bishops, and among the Protestants, elders; but Mr. Leach, and your people, generally, admit that in the New Testament these two names denote the same office. An elder, then, is a bishop; and a presiding elder, a presiding bishop, or, like the bishop of Rome when he presides,—a pope. The second order among the papists are priests, who conduct public worship, preach, and administer the sacraments; and this is the business of your second order, the preachers, who are subject to the elders, just as the Romish priests are to their bishops. The deacons of the papists form their third order, and are a grade below the priests; and the leaders form your third order, and are a grade below the preachers.

Who possess the executive power in the Roman church? The same three orders which make the laws, administer them. The pope, with his council of local officers at Rome, called cardinals, govern their church; and these cardinals represent the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons. Hence some of the cardinals are bishops, others are of the order of priests, and others have only been ordained deacons. Here again you exactly imitate the papists; the administration of your laws being in the hands of those who made them—the elders, preachers, and leaders. You know how violently your rulers have declaimed against us, under the pretence that the same persons who make the laws administer them; and yet they have adopted the very principle themselves, against which they have been vociferating till we are nearly deafened.

What has been objected against us, on this head, is not true. Our trustees, leaders, stewards, and local preachers, have much to do in the execution of our discipline, although they have nothing to do in the enacting of it. The Conference in a few cases administer the laws as well as make them; and this is in exact accordance with our political system, to which your people are perpetually appealing. Every one has heard of the high court of parliament, and of causes which have been tried before it. Our preachers preside in our spiritual courts; and members of parliament are often magistrates, and preside on the bench. The objections urged against us, therefore, will equally apply to the civil

taken for granted, if it be admitted at all ; for not a shadow of proof can be adduced in its favour. The word angel, as every one knows, signifies a messenger. The Messiah was the sent of God, — the angel, or messenger of the covenant. The word apostle has pretty much the same meaning, — a missionary, messenger, or envoy. The Galatians received St. Paul as an angel, or messenger of God, even as Christ Jesus. (Gal. iv. 14.) Titus was a partner, and fellow helper of the apostles Paul and Timothy ; and Luke and Apollos are supposed to be the persons who are styled their “brethren, the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.” (2 Cor. viii. 23) All these were itinerant ministers ; and there is no evidence that the title of angel, or messenger, was ever given to a permanent officer of a single church. Christ was sent by the Father, the apostles were sent by Christ, and the evangelists were sent by the apostles ; but we never read of elders being sent ; for they received their official appointment for the service of those churches of which they had previously been private members. As applied to an evangelist, therefore, the word angel, would have a significant meaning ; but to an elder, no meaning at all. Besides, we have abundant evidence of a single evangelist presiding in a church ; but none at all of an elder ever attaining to that distinction.

I must now leave this subject to your most serious consideration. I have shown how you have been deceived and betrayed ; and it is your duty, now that the cheat is exposed, to return to those who were instrumental in your conversion, who yearn over you in the bowels of Jesus Christ, who seek not yours, but you, and who will gladly spend and be spent in promoting your spiritual and eternal interests. I have demon-

constitution ; which is the great model your governors profess to follow. But in your connexion, the same as in the church of Rome, the whole of the executive is in the hands of the legislators. The main particulars of any government are, the head, the law makers, and the law administrators ; and in these you exactly imitate the papists.

strated that God's word is in our favour, and opposed to your new system; if you, therefore, pay any conscientious regard to the authority of scripture, and have not extinguished every feeling of obligation to us for the religious helps you received while under our care, I call upon you by the sacred ties of duty and gratitude, to "depart from the tents of these wicked men" who have imposed upon you, and to re-unite with those who were your first and best guides through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Canaan.

I am, your's affectionately and faithfully,

D. ISAAC.

LEEDS, *April* 19, 1830.

LETTER II.

The Conduct of the Protestant Methodists, in leaving the Old Connexion, brought to the Test of their own Professions, in a Second Letter addressed to the Private Members of that Community.

RESPECTED FRIENDS,

THE design of my first letter was to show that our ministry, and the more important parts of our discipline, have scripture authority for their support; and that in departing from us you have departed from the word of God. If my arguments cannot be overturned, and of that I am under no apprehension, the sinfulness of your secession cannot be denied; and your plain path of duty is to repent of your rashness, to flee from your seducers, and to return to the fold of Christ which you have deserted. I know you will feel some reluctance to retrace your steps; shame, and other kindred feelings, will operate powerfully to prevent a retreat; but since conscience, if you will allow it to speak, must condemn your late conduct, you can only enjoy peace of mind in humbling yourselves, con-

fessing your fault, and availing yourselves of this invitation to return. All sects are agreed, I believe, that unity among christians, as far as it can be maintained upon scripture principles, is desirable ; and that separation, when these principles do not require it, is sinful. Nothing certainly is plainer in the Bible than are the exhortations to christians, to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and to avoid divisions. But since the best christians have their infirmities and failings, if every fault we could find in a church would justify a breach of its unity, divisions must be perpetual and innumerable. What is more strongly inculcated in scripture than charity ? If we have not this, our noisy profession is only as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal ; and if we are living under its influence, it will cover a multitude of sins, and thus, in most cases, prevent all occasion of strife and schism. What will justify a division, is a question little understood, though of infinite importance. Let us examine it.

1. It is a duty to separate from a church, when we have substantial reasons for believing that she is separated from Christ. The apostate church mentioned in Rev. xviii. 4, is in this awful state ; and the call of duty to the few in it who adhere to the Lord, is, " Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." When God has left a church, it is time for his people to leave too ; but if they run before him, they get on too fast ; for a good man need not fear to remain where the divine presence may be enjoyed. If you can prove that God has left the Methodists, you can justify your separation from them ; but if you have abandoned them, and he continue with them, you have much cause for alarm at the precipitate step you have taken.

It is no uncommon thing for the dividers to be the culpable party. There is much more said in scripture respecting divisions being made by wicked than by good men. " For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing

the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts xx. 29, 30.) It would be easy to multiply passages of this sort. When one person wishes to disinherit another, we know how common it is to raise a clamour against him, and charge him with things of which he is innocent. A man's motives may be justly suspected, when he is bawling against his neighbour with a view to get his situation. Now what is the state of the case between us and your protesters? They have been vociferating against us till their throats are dry, have persuaded many of you to join them in a revolt, and have told you that you shall have itinerant ministers, such as St. Paul and John Wesley, sent forth in the name of the Lord. And how have they served you? Why, without consulting either of their professed patrons, they have stripped the office of all its powers, and unceremoniously divided these among themselves; they have promised you that they will administer them more to your advantage; and they have set up a few puppet missionaries, without any of the prerogatives of their office, who can only move as the strings are pulled by these showmen. Had they been honest men, and themselves believed what they have persuaded you to believe, they would have set up such missionaries as those who were employed by the apostle and our founder; instead of which, as I have made it abundantly manifest, they have not paid the slightest regard to either the Bible or the Minutes, though these they protested should be their guides. They have acted just like a set of rogues, who first abuse a man with words, then rob him of his money, and strip him of his clothes; and to save their own necks, try to persuade the judge and jury that the clothes were intended for them, because they fit them better than they did him; that he will do his work better in a state of nudity, than with the incumbrances about him of which they deprived him; that the money found upon him belonged to the public; and that they had a scheme by which they could employ it to the greater benefit of the

community, than he could have done. A verdict of not guilty must, of course, follow such a defence.

It is not a sufficient proof of God having forsaken a church, that there are some errors in its doctrines, worship, ministers, and people.

1. Of doctrines. A church may hold all the essential doctrines of christianity, with some errors; and yet these may not be of sufficient magnitude to neutralise the truth. Upon this point I need not enlarge, because you do not charge us with corrupting the word of God, but profess great zeal for the doctrines of Methodism. Herein you differ essentially from the protestants who effected the reformation. Their protestations lay chiefly against the doctrines of the papists, as the source of almost every other error. The corruption of worship sprung out of the corruption of faith. There would have been no idolatrous worship of the host, but for the doctrine of transubstantiation; no prayers for the dead, but for the doctrine of purgatory, etc. An impure ritual can never be associated with a pure creed. It would have sounded odd at that time of day, had the protestants expressed a warm attachment to the whole body of popish doctrine! This very circumstance ought to excite your suspicion that you are under delusion. There is another consideration also, of a very alarming nature: many of the heads of your party were suspected of heterodoxy respecting the Trinity. It was naturally expected that this most momentous subject would be noticed, in some way, in your list of doctrines; but though it extends to fourteen particulars, the Trinity is left out. Does not this startle you?

2. Of worship. No one doubts, I presume, but that worship may be spiritual in its nature, and acceptable to God, though the form and manner may possess much of imperfection. Here I must take up the organ question. I object to organs, and all other instruments of music, in public worship; because I think the christian sacrifice of praise should be "the fruit of

our lips." But I always thought that these appendages did not very seriously vitiate the service of God, and, therefore, ought not to be made the occasion of disturbing, and much less of destroying, the peace of the church. If a person, however, be of opinion, that it is sinful to worship where such bawbles are used, and on that account peaceably withdraw from his religious associates, I should honour his motives, and esteem him as a conscientious man. Now how does the matter stand, as it regards your people? Instruments had been played for many years up to the time of the division, in the chapels where they were accustomed to worship, without their protesting against the practice. And the local preachers, who were most vociferous against an organ being set up in Brunswick chapel, had regularly served a chapel at Burley in which there was an organ, for "full ten years before the organ question at Leeds was agitated." I have the highest authority for stating that this chapel was "built originally for the express use of the Wesleyan Methodist local preachers." An engagement on the part of the superintendent of the circuit to grant a regular supply of local brethren, was the condition on which it was originally erected. This was, therefore, a local preachers' chapel. It is possible they might have been convinced about the time the dispute broke out, of the sinfulness of using instrumental music in public worship; but, had that really been the case, they would first have cleansed their own sanctuary. "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matt. vii. 5.) Instead of taking this course, they never quarrelled with the organ at Burley; and continue to serve the chapel without manifesting the slightest offence at the "glorious box of sounds."

This is one of the most extraordinary affairs that the history of human inconsistency can furnish. A gentleman devotes a chapel, with an organ in it, to the use of the local preachers; and they seem to be mightily pleased

with their whistles. Some gentlemen build another chapel in the vicinity, for the use of the travelling preachers, principally, which they supply with a similar piece of furniture. At this the consciences of the local brethren take alarm, and become tortured almost to distraction; and the whole nation* is disturbed with their most bitter lamentations, that the proud, haughty, worldly Conference preachers, and their friends, should be entertained like themselves. Here you perceive how the consciences of these Protestants work. They get our preachers turned out of the chapel at Burley, and themselves "rejoice at the sound of the organ" there; their consciences then immediately turn, like the vane of a weathercock, to the opposite point of the compass, become hysterical at the sight of the pipes in Leeds, and cannot hold fellowship any longer with these corrupters of the pure and spiritual worship of the Deity. Had they studied to contradict their professions, and make themselves appear ridiculous, how could they have hit on an expedient more admirably adapted to their purpose? The truth is, they have no objection to organs for themselves; they only object to other people having them: they wish to have a monopoly of the article!

When your people are pressed with the fact of your having an organ in your own connexion, the usual answer is, that the organ, and the chapel in which it is set up, are private property, over which you have no control.

And what control has the proprietor of the chapel over your preachers? Can he compel them to act contrary to their consciences? If their consciences obliged them to leave us on account of the organ at Brunswick, they must have felt the same injunction to

* Ay, and America too; for it appears from a letter in the Protestant Magazine for January last, that brother Jonathan has heard the sound of the Leeds organ; and that thousands of his countrymen are deeply sympathising with their suffering brethren on this side the water. It is to be hoped their tears will not form another Atlantic. I have not heard whether this noisy instrument has disturbed the tranquillity of Africa and Asia.

come out from Burley. But where have they learned that it is lawful to worship with an organ, if it be the property of one man ; but that it is very sinful, if it happen to belong to a dozen or fifteen ? I am not casuist enough to comprehend this. And so if a popish gentleman were to invite your preachers to perform mass in his private chapel, they could, I suppose, do it very conscientiously, because of the mass-house being private property ; but if the same service were performed in a chapel settled upon trustees, it would then be idolatrous. Here I am quite out of my depth ! The short and full answer to all the noise and nonsense which the protesters have uttered against the organ is this : “ If you think it sinful, you are self-condemned in using it ; if you think its use lawful, you are in the same condemnation for making a division on account of it. In either case, your wickedness is manifest ; and all your blustering deserves no other feeling than contempt.”

But it is said, that the organ was not opposed so much on its own account, as under an impression that the church prayers were to follow. It is conceded then that the organ would not justify the separation. A much greater sin, it seems, was advancing ; and it became a measure of prudence with the seceders to take care of themselves, by a timely retreat, before it should overtake them. It turns out, however, that they have run faster towards this gulf than the Brunswickers have done, and have reached it before them ; for though the liturgy is not used in our new chapel, yet in October last your legislators made the following rules ; namely, “ 1. That our brethren in London be allowed the use of Mr. Wesley’s Abridgment of the Liturgy in their chapels, where a majority of the preachers, leaders, stewards, and trustees desire it, inasmuch as they have been accustomed to it from the early periods of Methodism. But as a general principle, this meeting entertains a very strong objection to the liturgy being read in our chapels. 2. That the permission, in reference to the reading of the liturgy

in the chapels in London, shall not be extended to any other place."

Did infatuation ever before reach this extreme? After such a coalition, I firmly believe that if a company of papists would but join them in abuse of us, they would receive the fraternal hug, and the next yearly meeting would decree, "That our brethren," the catholics, "be allowed the use of" the mass "in their chapels, where a majority of the" priests, etc., "desire it, inasmuch as they have been accustomed to it from the early periods of" popery. It would, however, be necessary, in order to save appearances, to enter a caveat: "But as a general principle, this meeting entertains a very strong objection to the" mass "being read in our chapels."

The offer of the London agitators to assist those of Leeds in pulling down the old connexion, provided they might be allowed the use of the liturgy, placed the honest Yorkshiremen in a very painful dilemma. They could not say much against the organ, as they possessed one themselves; but the liturgy! — the dread of the liturgy, had frightened them out of our church, and nearly out of their senses. And now they can obtain assistance in their godly work of dividing and destroying our societies, only on the hard condition of adopting this hated liturgy! But what is to be done? Such valuable auxiliaries must not be lost to the good cause. In such an awkward predicament they must put on a bold face, and affirm that in granting the use of the liturgy they compromise no principle, though, "as a general principle, they entertain a very strong objection to the liturgy being read in their chapels;" and that, though such super-eminent saints as these cockneys are, may profit by the indulgence, "as they have been accustomed to it from the early periods of Methodism," yet, that no one else could be edified by it; on which account they have ordained, lastly, in order to complete their consistency, "that the permission in reference to the reading of the liturgy in the chapels in London, shall not be extended to any other place," though the

people may have been accustomed to it from their childhood! Herod and Pilate united to put Christ to death; and the affair was of sufficient importance to make them friends; and he was crucified between two thieves.

The great objections against us were, for a long time, that the simplicity and spirituality of worship amongst us were fast dying away; and that we substituted in their stead, for the amusement of our people under their loss, organs and liturgies, and all the pomp of a formal service. And as soon as you had organised your new system, you adopted the very things on account of which you professed to have left us! The nonconformists of the seventeenth century dissented from the church, principally on account of its diocesan episcopacy and its liturgy. Now had these men, to whose distinctive appellative your people at one time discovered a predilection, immediately after leaving the church, established among themselves the very things which they declared occasioned their separation, and called themselves "Protestant Churchmen," they would have acted just as our seceders have done, and would have merited and received, if not the execration, at least the derision, of the nation. These men, however, did not merely talk about conscience, their actions demonstrated that they were governed by its sacred dictates. But if the annals of hypocrisy were ransacked from Judas down to the present day, a parallel to the conduct of our Protestants could not be discovered.

But some of you will be surprised that I, who have written against both organs and liturgies, should be opposed to you, when you rather expected that I should join your ranks; and I expect you will hear me spoken of as a turn-coat, and a deserter of your holy cause. My sentiments remain unaltered on the points under consideration; except that this dispute has convinced me more than ever of the folly and wickedness of distracting and dividing christian societies about non-essentials. Had I thought my opinions of consequence enough to justify a separation, I should have taken that

step long before the organ was heard at Burley, or the liturgy was dreamed about as a form of worship for our chapels in Leeds. But suppose I had come over to you, what a pretty situation should I have been in? You have only two circuits that could support an itinerant preacher, Leeds and London; but in neither of these could I have travelled; for in the Leeds circuit you have an organ, and in London the liturgy. In such a case, therefore, I must have left you, for the same reasons that I had left the old connexion, or, like some others, must have proclaimed myself a vile hypocrite before the whole world.

3. Of ministers. It is as necessary they should live the gospel, as preach it. It is expecting too much to suppose, however, considering the infirmity of human nature, that they will all be strictly virtuous. Of the twelve apostles, one was a son of perdition, and was lost; and another disgraced himself, and the cause of Christ, by lying, cursing, and swearing. Here were two out of twelve who acted an unworthy part. Was that a sufficient reason to justify a breach of fellowship with the other ten? to set up a rival society, and send incendiaries through the country, abusing the apostles as thieves and infidel blasphemers, because one had made too free with some money intrusted to his care, and another had denied his Master with an oath? If all the ministers, or the greater part of them, in any religious community, be bad men, the expediency of remaining in it may be justly doubted; but if a large majority of them be good men, the Spirit of Christ will never prompt a man to divide from them. As regards the Methodist ministers, I challenge their greatest enemies to show that one in six, or even one in twelve, has dishonoured his profession, by any act of immorality. The great outcry has been against a few men, who, it is said, rule the connexion; and even these few are not charged with immorality, but only with being too fond of power. And is this a reason why near a thousand should be subjected to indiscriminate abuse, and be abandoned as unworthy of the fellow-

ship of saints? If any Methodist preachers could have been charged with such crimes as Judas and Peter committed, our Protestants would have martyred themselves with raving against them. In this age of light and charity, no lenity is shown to the failings of a minister; and many of those who boast of being so full of the love of Christ that they are ready to burst, instead of pitying and hiding their infirmities, are the first and most zealous in spreading them abroad. And after all that has been said of the farce of preachers trying one another, I do not believe, from what I have noticed of the severity of discipline practised amongst us, that if a preacher were found guilty of an offence similar to that committed by St. Peter, he would ever again be allowed to travel in our connexion; though the apostle was restored to his office by his divine Master, in the course of a few weeks. I have known men expelled for less faults, whom the Conference have refused to employ again, though no one doubted the reality of their repentance. It has long been my opinion that our discipline, generally, instead of being too lax, is too strict.

In the Protestant Magazine for September last, there is an "extract of a letter from a preacher in the Conference connexion," in which the writer says, "With the New Testament in my hand, and the constitution of Methodism before me, and, at the same time, looking at these anti-christian assumptions, I feel I cannot continue much longer a Conference Methodist. With me it has become a religious question. To support anti-christian pretensions, in my judgment, must involve guilt, and, also, endanger personal salvation." This is the first attempt I have seen, and a most clumsy one it is, to frighten our people from us with threats of damnation. Does the writer mean to say, that the connexion is abandoned of God? if so, there is no more piety among the people, than among the preachers. All who entertain such views of us, and yet remain with us, must be hypocrites; and let the state of the connexion be what it may, the sooner it is

purged of these croakers the better. Our members, however, are fawned upon and flattered: they are pious and intelligent, and ought to resist the tyranny of a domineering priesthood! The Protestants have never yet hinted that all the virtue of the connexion went away with them; they will grant therefore, I presume, that the Lord is yet amongst us; and that our people, as a body, belong to the household of faith, and not to the synagogue of satan. In this state of things, for a man to talk of incurring guilt, and endangering his salvation, by maintaining a union cemented with the presence and blessing of Jehovah, betrays a monstrous degree of ignorance, or something worse. When this defamer talks of leaving us to save his soul, because some of his brethren, as he thinks, are acting improperly,—he is like a shepherd, who, on seeing some wolves enter the fold, immediately took to his heels, under an apprehension that the proprietor of the flock would cashier him, if, instead of staying to defend his charge, according to the best of his power, he had not ran away, and left them to their fate. Such a shepherd would be more fit for a lunatic asylum, than for the care of sheep.

His sin, in such a case, does not consist in abiding by his post, but in deserting it.

I do not wish for better proof of the calumnies which our preachers have suffered, being undeserved, than the fact, which their slanderers admit, that the great body of our people enjoy the life and power of godliness. The history of the world will not furnish an instance of a corrupt priesthood producing a virtuous people. Everything generates its own kind. You do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. The old adage is still true: "Like priest, like people." A soul cannot be renewed without the Spirit of God giving efficiency to the word; and if he will connect his agency with the ministry of covetous and ambitious priests, and render their labours effectual to the conversion of tens of thousands, then you are furnished with an answer to the apostle's knotty questions, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and

what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" (2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.) No, no: such alliances are unnatural and impossible. And if it be, as Christ hath affirmed, an unpardonable blasphemy, to say, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils;" it cannot come far short of the same awful crime, to suppose that he casteth satan out of the hearts of the children of disobedience, by the ministers of satan.

As the revilers dare not attack the character of our people, their vituperation of the preachers is unmerited and unjust. Having shown it to be contrary to scripture, reason, and experience, that the priesthood should be corrupt, when the church is pure, the accusers of the brethren stand convicted before the world of bearing false witness against their neighbours.

4. Of members. They are admitted into the church to be trained up for heaven. Of course, they are not all perfect christians; for it requires time to bring them into that state. Some remain who turn out hypocrites; others fall away; and others make slow progress, and are occasionally overtaken with a fault. Those, therefore, who will be satisfied with nothing short of a perfect church, must wait till they get to heaven, (though it is very doubtful whether they will ever arrive there,) before they find one. It would be well for such people to consider, whether they be fit for such a society, and whether their admission into it would not spoil its character! None but perfect christians should be tenacious of being united to a perfect church. The great majority of the members, indeed, must be the subjects of grace, or their fellowship cannot be the communion of saints; but the seceders, as has been already remarked, have not left us because the private members, generally, are not good people; the purity of the body, therefore, need not be defended.

2. It becomes a duty to separate from a church when it imposes anything sinful. We must obey God rather than men; and if we cannot retain our

membership without violating our consciences, the voice of duty imperatively demands, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." (2 Cor. vi. 17.) Nothing sinful was required of you by the Conference. You were not commanded either to play the organ, or to read the liturgy. And if you think it sinful to join in worship where these are used, you must be reminded, that in the chapels in Leeds there is no liturgy, and that in three out of the four you might be comfortably accommodated without hearing "the sound of the organ." If you contend that all the members of a religious community are involved in guilt, when such things are tolerated in any of their places of worship, then you must be reminded again, that by your own connexion both these offensive things are adopted. You do not pretend, I believe, that you were obliged to commit sin in anything else had you continued among us. The truth is, there is nothing enjoined by our connexion to hurt any man's conscience. It was the pride of your seducers which was hurt; they were determined to govern the body, both preachers and people; and when they found they could not accomplish their design, they abused the preachers, set up for themselves, and persuaded you to submit to their yoke.

3. It is lawful to separate from a church when the means of salvation, or of general edification, are wanting in it. You cannot assign this as your reason for leaving us. For you profess that you found salvation amongst us, and that, up to the time of the late unhappy dispute, the means of grace were spirit and life to your souls. And in these you have made no alteration. You hear the same doctrines from the pulpit as formerly. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, you receive from your own preachers, or, if you prefer it, from the church clergy, just as when you were with us. You have set up no new means of grace, but adhere to class meetings, band meetings, prayer meetings, love feasts, and watch nights. You have, therefore, no religious helps supe-

rior to those you formerly enjoyed. The protestants of the reformation differed essentially from you in these matters. They divided from the church of Rome, because of her corruption of worship, as well as of doctrine. They deemed the mass, the worship of men, women, and angels, and prayers for the dead, to be idolatrous and superstitious; and they abolished them. They objected to the sacraments of the papists, that five were added to the original number, that baptism was vitiated by puerilities and absurdities, and that the Lord's supper was poisoned by priestly adulterations; and they rejected those of popish invention, and purified the two of divine institution. Had the protestants retained the mass, the seven sacraments, the adoration of the host, angels, saints, and sinners; and all the other abominations of Rome; what would have been thought and said of them? Had they admitted that the popish services were wells of salvation to them, and that in them they had received pardon, regeneration, and a regular growth in grace, how could they have justified their secession? Such extravagance in the reformers would have ruined their cause for ever.

I know of no other justifiable causes of separation than the three to which I have adverted above. And as you cannot defend your conduct on any of these grounds, you are guilty of disturbing the peace of the church, and of sowing discord among brethren. But since many other reasons have been assigned for the rash step you have taken, I must proceed to examine them.

It has been affirmed that our plan of discipline is opposed to the rights of free-born Englishmen, and is destructive of liberty. Your governors have been loud in their appeals to the British constitution, claim its privilege of being tried by their peers, and spurn the slavery of being tried by a superior order of officers. One would suppose, while listening to their declamations against the degradation which the sons of freedom suffer in this land of liberty, while members of the

Methodist society, that our civil constitution existed in Palestine, in the days of Christ and his apostles, and that they took it for their model in framing their ecclesiastical polity. The New Testament knows nothing of the British constitution. We not only grant, but contend, that for excellency it stands unrivalled. But we do not forget that Christ's kingdom is not of this world ; that it differs from all civil establishments in its nature, its principles, and its end ; and that, consequently, the best constitution for the state would be quite unfit for the church.

Let us see how far this principle of the state is carried in your laws. The election and trial of local preachers, and leaders, is by their peers : here the analogy ends. If this principle of our civil constitution be so excellent in the church, why do you object to us for adopting it in any instance ? and why do not you carry it into every grade of your own society ? You have heard much of the farce of itinerants trying itinerants among us ; but when local preachers try local preachers among you, then this is the noble privilege of Britons, and the glorious liberty of the sons of God ! Since this principle is so liberal and spiritual, why have not your people the benefit of it ? Your laws say, "Private members of society shall be tried by the leaders' meeting." Look at this, and see how you have been hoaxed. You were promised the liberty of being tried by your peers, like free-born Englishmen ; and your passions were roused almost to frenzy at the thought of the ignominy you suffered in being deprived of this right ; and now the battle is over, and your new constitution is promulgated, you are just in the same condition as when you were with us, before you engaged in this conflict ; for you were amenable to the leaders' meeting then, and you are so still. That the troublers of our Israel, at the time they were inflaming your minds against us, had no intention of granting you the boon they promised, is evident ; for they could as easily have decreed that private members should try one another, as that they should be tried by the leaders'

meeting ; but by such a rule they would have lost the prize they so boisterously contended for, which was not to increase your liberty, but to gratify their own pride and ambition.

If election and trial by peers be the great privilege of the church, why are your missionaries deprived of it ? You do not allow them any such privilege. They are to be approved by "the local preachers' and quarterly meetings," as eligible for the office ; and then the committee of elders, etc., are "authorised to call out and employ such missionary candidates as they may approve." Missionaries have no more to do with the trial of their own body, than with their appointment. "They shall be subject to the same rules as the preachers," that is, local preachers.* One of these rules is, "Should any charge of immorality or want of conformity to our rules, attachment to our doctrines, or want of ability for the work, be preferred against any preacher, it shall first be sent to the presiding elder, who shall be empowered to summon a special preachers' meeting for the occasion, if necessary, and to call before them the person preferring the complaint, and also the accused person ; and after investigating the case, they shall have power to suspend the accused preacher from office, until the ensuing quarterly meeting, whose decision in the case shall be final."† Here are two tribunals, the local preachers' meeting, and the quarterly meeting, competent to try a missionary, neither of which is composed of his peers. But besides these two, he is amenable to another tribunal, that of the missionary committee, consisting of elders and others, to which his colleagues have no access. The committee are "authorised to employ such missionary candidates as they may approve, and as the state of the funds, and calls for assistance, may justify." So that

* The Protestants call their itinerant ministers, missionaries ; and those who in the old connexion are denominated local preachers, are by them termed simply, preachers.

† Rules, p. 16.

should a missionary offend these gentlemen, they can be at no loss for a pretext to dismiss him, without any trial at all. The "calls for assistance" have ceased, or "the funds" are in a declining state, or they do not "approve" of him; and he may go a begging as soon as he pleases. Here is the liberty of an Englishman, granted to a missionary, by Protestants maintaining the most liberal system of church government in christendom! He has given up his worldly employment to serve the church of Christ; and is liable to be sent adrift in a trice, by a knot of jealous elders, who have, perhaps, taken umbrage at his faithfulness.

It will serve to unveil the mystery of the above enactments to keep in mind that one person may hold several offices; he may be an elder, a local preacher, and a leader; but the office of elder is supreme. The elders, therefore, have taken care of themselves. I have shown in my first letter, that there is no tribunal before which they can be arraigned. Every office they can grasp is to be inviolable. The leaders' meeting may have several elders in it; and, therefore, leaders are to enjoy the rights of Englishmen, and be tried by their peers: the same remark applies to the local preachers. But elders are not private members; and, therefore, these are deprived of the privilege: and as missionaries might be dangerous rivals, they are in the same predicament, and may be trampled under foot by their superiors whenever they fail to deport themselves with becoming humility!

There is another rule which ill accords with our civil constitution. "In the elders' meetings, and all other meetings, everything shall be decided by a majority of votes, the chairman to have but one vote."* In our courts of judicature, a majority does not decide a case: the jury must be unanimous. And was it ever known that the chairman, or judge, in any of our courts, was associated with the jury, and gave a vote on the fate of the prisoner?

* Rules, p. 13.

In the state, it is essential to liberty that the people have representatives in the legislature, of their own choosing. But the private members in your connexion cannot send a single deputy to the yearly meeting. If the state, then, is to be the model of the church, as the brawlers about the liberties of Englishmen are perpetually vociferating, why have they deprived you of all access in your own persons, or by your chosen delegates, to the legislative assembly? The want of conformity to the British constitution, it would be easy to show, is greater in your spiritual code than in ours; if you left us therefore under an expectation that your rules were to be in accordance with our civil code, you begin to see, I hope, that your rulers have left you in the lurch; and till the above anomalies are explained, I hope we shall not be annoyed with any more silly invectives against the preachers, as the destroyers of English liberty.

In a letter from a Protestant Methodist inserted in your Magazine for August last, and addressed to the editor, the writer remarks, "As you have frequently stated that the Conference laws of Methodism are contrary to reason, to the British constitution, and to the New Testament; and as the Conference preachers stiffly deny such declarations, I beg leave to suggest, that in order to settle the dispute, you should print, in separate columns, some of the laws to which allusion has been so frequently made in your excellent miscellany, and also those of the British constitution, those of the New Testament, and lastly your own; the religious public will then be able to form a correct judgment upon the subject." The editor I presume approved of the suggestion, or, at least, wished his readers to think so, or he would not have given it currency. But none of your people have furnished the printed columns. Those of them who have thought upon the subject, know better. Their frequent statements, without any attempts at proof, appear to answer their purpose admirably well. So long as you are willing to be gulled in this way, you

will certainly be supplied with these "frequent statements." The writer, however, seems to have been nearly weary of them, and modestly hints, that they ought to be authenticated; and by this time, your credulity, I hope, has begun to stagger. In my former letter I exhibited in parallel columns the discipline of the New Testament, of Conference Methodism, and of Protestant Methodism; and I have the pleasure of knowing already, that the view I presented has satisfied the minds of hundreds. For reasons already assigned, we do not consider the laws of the realm as exactly adapted to the government of the church; a little discordancy, therefore, between the two codes, does not occasion to us any embarrassment. But since the British statute book is supposed by your people to be of equal authority with the New Testament, in matters of ecclesiastical discipline; you are obliged to show the agreement of your laws with the laws of the land. When your advocate shall come forth to make out his demonstration, I beg he will just glance at the following contrast.

THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION,

THE PROTESTANT METHODISTS,

1. Recognises two distinct legislative assemblies.
2. Gives the king a veto on every proposed law.
3. Gives the people a right to elect their own representatives in the commons' house of parliament.
4. Would be destroyed, were all the members of the house of commons elected by officers of the executive government.
5. Allows of trial by peers to all the people.
6. Does not decide the fate of

1. Protest against it; and have provided but one.
2. Protest against it; the power of legislation being exclusively in the yearly meeting.
3. Protest against it; their private members not being allowed to send a single representative to the yearly meeting.
4. Allow none to vote for legislators but members of the local preachers' and quarterly meetings; and these all belong to the executive government.
5. Protest against it; and deprive their missionaries and private members of the privilege.
6. Protest against it; and de-

a prisoner by the vote of a majority of the jurors; but by their unanimous voice.

7. Does not permit a judge to vote in any criminal cause.

cide every cause by a majority of votes.

7. Protest against it; and empower their chairman to give a single vote in every cause.

Was it not worth while to leave us, that you might enjoy the benefits of the British constitution in the Protestant society?

Much has been said respecting the degrading document, as it is termed, which was read to the leaders, and to which their assent was required as a qualification to sit in judgment on the disaffected. It was deemed a reflection on their honour, and implied a suspicion of their attachment to Methodism. Where there was no proof of this, it was contended there ought to have been no jealousy; and it was considered unjust to bring a man to such a test, whose Methodistical loyalty could not be impeached without it.

As much misconception has prevailed on the subject of this paper, I will give it verbatim from the stewards' book.

"We, the undersigned, members of the leaders' meeting, assembling at the old chapel, taking into consideration the troubles at present existing in the society, and especially the reports which have been widely circulated in newspapers respecting the proceedings of a part of the members of this meeting, do feel ourselves called upon to express our cordial attachment to Wesleyan Methodism, and our determination to discharge our proper duties in the Methodist society, by freely subscribing* our names, in token of our cordial assent, to the following resolutions:—

"1. As our regular weekly leaders' meetings are sufficient for the transaction of the business of the society, and our quarterly meeting for the business of the circuit, and as other meetings of leaders, local preach-

* As some hesitated to subscribe, who approved of the resolutions, the verbal expression of their assent was accepted as sufficient.

ers, and others, called without the knowledge and consent of the superintendent, are contrary to the rules of pacification,* and tend to disunite and divide us, we unreservedly engage not to attend any meetings of that description, but to conform ourselves to our existing laws on that subject.

“ 2. As it has been reported that many of the leaders of this meeting have united in a determination to advise the members of their classes not to pay their usual contributions, we hereby engage to observe and enforce in our classes, our old rule on that subject, not only by receiving what the members are willing to give, but by prudently, and in the spirit of christian kindness, advising them, as need may require, to contribute as God hath prospered them.

“ 3. We hereby renew the engagements which we either virtually or formally made when we were first appointed to our office as leaders, to act in all things as God shall give us grace so to do, in conformity with our excellent discipline, which we believe, as a whole, to be agreeable to the word of God ; and it is our determination to seek for ourselves, and press upon the members of our classes, such a heartfelt belief of those essential doctrines of the gospel which are taught amongst us, as shall produce in our lives, and in theirs, all the peaceable fruits of righteousness.”

That there was an organized opposition to the preachers, and some important rules of the connexion, made by leaders and local preachers, who held their regular secret meetings, in which a chairman presided, and a secretary minuted down the resolutions, and proceedings, no one now pretends to deny. And that no society, civil or religious, could long subsist in which such things should remain unnoticed, is too plain to require any proof. And yet, it seems, no test is to be applied, in the absence of positive evidence, to ascertain who are the guilty party. And where did your Protestant agitators learn this ? Here they bawl about the

* See Minutes, vol. i., p. 376.

liberty of Englishmen, and the liberty of the gospel, at a most marvellous rate ; taking care, however, to avoid any specific reference to either the law of the land, or the testimony of God. Let us hear what these have to say upon the subject.

The great principle of the celebrated Alfred's government was to make his subjects responsible for one another. "That he might render the execution of justice," says Mr. Hume, "strict and regular, he divided all England into counties : these counties he sub-divided into hundreds, and the hundreds into tithings. Every householder was answerable for the behaviour of his family and slaves. Ten neighbouring householders were formed into one corporation ; who, under the name of tithing, decennary, or fribourg, were answerable for each other's conduct ; and over whom one person, called a tithingman, headbourg, or borsholder, was appointed to preside. When any person in any tithing or decennary was guilty of a crime, the borsholder was summoned to answer for him ; and if he were not willing to be surety for his appearance, and his clearing himself, the criminal was committed to prison, and there detained till his trial. If he fled either before or after finding sureties, the borsholder and decennary became liable to inquiry, and were exposed to the penalties of law ; thirty-one days were allowed them for producing the criminal ; and if the time elapsed without their being able to find him, the borsholder, with two other members of the decennary, was obliged to appear, and, together with three chief members of the three neighbouring decennaries, (making twelve in all,) to swear that his decennary was free from all privy, both of the crime committed, and of the escape of the criminal. If the borsholder could not find such a number to answer for their innocence, the decennary was compelled by fine to make satisfaction to the king, according to the degree of the offence. By this institution every man was obliged, from his own interest, to keep a watchful eye over the conduct of his neighbours ; and was, in a manner,

surety for the behaviour of those who were placed under the division to which he belonged."

In this case, when one of the community had violated the law, the rest were made responsible: and if they could not produce twelve good men and true, living in their vicinity, to swear to their innocence, they had to suffer the penalty. This was something more than a verbal assent to the laws, as a qualification to act as jurymen. And remember this excellent king instituted the trial by jury. The moral influence of his laws, and his love of liberty are thus noticed by Hume: "Such success attended his legislation, that everything bore suddenly a new face in England: robberies and iniquities of all kinds were repressed, by the punishment or reformation of the criminals; and so exact was the general police, that Alfred, it is said, hung up by way of bravado, golden bracelets near the highways; and no man dared to touch them. Yet amidst these rigours of justice, this great prince preserved the most sacred regard to the liberty of his people; and it is a memorable sentiment, preserved in his will, that it was just the English should for ever remain as free as their own thoughts."

The testimony of scripture supports this principle of mutual responsibility. In Deut. xxi. 1—9, the case is put, of a murder being committed by a person or persons unknown. Suspicion immediately falls upon the inhabitants of the nearest city; who, to clear themselves, are obliged, by their elders, to sacrifice an heifer: "And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley; and they shall answer and say, our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord."

In the above instances, the parties against whom

there was no evidence of guilt, when a crime was committed by an associate, or in their vicinity, were required to clear themselves of suspicion by the most solemn protestations of their innocence. Now the document in question makes no inquiries into the past, but merely gives a pledge as to the future. Had they all been guilty, no confession was required, but only a promise of obedience for the time to come. The superintendent's test, therefore, was much easier than either of those appointed by Alfred and Moses. According to the laws of Alfred, the oaths of the inhabitants of the tithing to which the delinquent belonged, was not sufficient to clear them; the oaths of nine other persons belonging to three neighbouring tithings were necessary to remove from them the reproach and punishment of a crime committed by one of their associates. And in the case mentioned in Deut. xxi. 1—9, the city might be several miles from the place where the murder was committed; but that did not excuse the inhabitants from the trouble of clearing themselves of all participation in the crime, by the most solemn declarations, and the most awful ceremonies. Had they been like our Protestants, they would have stood out most stiffly against the degradation of making such confessions and expiations.

Some of the violators of our laws were known, and the superintendent determined to sift the matter to the bottom. They treated him with ridicule and contempt, set him at defiance, and boasted that a large majority of the leaders were in their favour, had attended the illegal meetings, were pledged to stand by them, and would acquit them. Common sense, and English law, and the word of God, all agreed to assure him, that the ends of justice could not be answered, if a delinquent were tried by his partners in guilt; and as this was the character given of many of the jurors by the accused, he disappointed their expectations and spoiled their mirth, by providing the test. Then came forth the dolorous lamentations against packed juries, despotic priests, and infringements on British liberty.

This document merely regarded their qualifications, as jurors, to try those against whom charges were preferred, for violating the laws of the society. The reason of the case requires, that those who try others should be impartial themselves, free from any strong bias either for or against the accused. In our civil courts, a man is not thought to be degraded by a test; for every jurymen is put to his oath. There, a mere declaration is not thought sufficient; and if a jurymen were to hector the judge respecting the degradation a free-born Englishman must endure, to be obliged to make oath that he will deal fairly between the king and the prisoner at the bar, and decide according to the evidence, he would soon find himself in a box, not quite so comfortable as the jury box. But before he is brought to this test, he may be excepted against by the prisoner, and dismissed, without any reason being assigned for it; and so, on the other side, if he be suspected of partiality to the prisoner, he may be ordered off unceremoniously; for "in cases where the king is party, the justices of gaol delivery, or of the peace in sessions, may reform the panels of jurors, by putting to and taking out of the names of the persons impanelled, by their discretion."* This is carrying matters a great deal further than just requiring an expression of approval of the constitution; and determination to abide by the laws.

In all cases when rebels are known to be in a place, all the loyal subjects in it will be as anxious as government officers can be to detect them; and will therefore, cheerfully submit to any test which appears likely to answer that purpose. None but the rebels and their friends can object to this. So it was at Leeds. The faithful leaders who, contrary to the predictions of the disaffected, formed the majority, were thankful for the test. When men will rather abandon Methodism, than express their approval of it, we know what state their hearts are in; and it is high time "they went out from us."

* Williams's Justice, vol. iii., p. 18.

Many who refused this test left us; but none were expelled for not subscribing or assenting to it. The non-conformist leaders, as they then called themselves, might have all continued in office, as well as in the society; and the past would have been buried in oblivion, on a promise that they would attend no more opposition meetings. The following resolution was passed by the leaders' meeting, Dec. 10th, 1827: "That the dissentient leaders who will not, from this time, explicitly engage to desist entirely from attending those opposition meetings, which so manifestly lead to a division, be now removed from their office." "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand." To have kept in their office men who were determined to attend opposition meetings, would have amounted to a surrender of discipline, and a dissolution of the society. If you left us, therefore, on account of the test, you left us because your superintendents would not give up the whole of our discipline, and act contrary to the laws of both God and man. Think on these things; and may God open your eyes to see your sin and danger!

The suspension of the local preacher who acted as secretary in the illegal meetings, created a strange uproar against the itinerant preachers, as being arbitrary and despotic men, who invaded the civil and religious rights of the local brethren. Let us see.

With regard to the religious part of the question, the inquiry is, whether the local preachers ought to govern itinerants, or the contrary. I have proved in my former letter, from the express testimony of scripture, that itinerant preachers, or evangelists, had authority to appoint and depose elders. It is as plain from the New Testament that the elders were local officers, as that the itinerants had jurisdiction over them. Some of the elders, at least, were local preachers. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." (1 Tim. v. 17.) It is agreed on all hands, that labouring in the word and doctrine, denotes preaching. Here then, are local preachers, who were

elders also, over whom the evangelist Timothy had authority. There were, no doubt, in New Testament times, some local preachers who were not elders; and as your "elders must be preachers," and as you have local preachers who are not elders, you cannot dispute these points with me, without disputing against yourselves. But if the evangelists presided over the local preachers who were elders, as we have seen they did, they must also have been superior to the local preachers who held no other office. The more offices a man holds, the greater is his dignity. This principle is admitted amongst you; for the local preachers who are elders may preside in preachers' meetings; but a mere local preacher cannot even attend a meeting of elders, and cannot preside in a preachers' meeting, if an elder be present. The conclusion then is, that according to the New Testament and common sense, evangelists or itinerants, are superior to all local preachers, whether they be elders or not. But the same conclusion may be come to in a more compendious way. Titus, who was an itinerant preacher, was not only authorised to "ordain elders in every city," but was also empowered to "set in order the things that were wanting;" which words contain a general licence to appoint any officers, or perform any act of discipline, according to his discretion. But this would not, and could not, have been the case, if the supremacy, or even a *veto* on Titus's acts, had been lodged in any local officers whatever.

Having demonstrated from the scripture that itinerant are superior to local preachers, and have jurisdiction over them, it only remains, to complete the defence of the Leeds superintendent, to show that scripture does not require a judge in a spiritual court to submit the decision of the penalty to a majority of the peers of the accused. This is easily done. St. Paul, though absent, decided on the expulsion of the incestuous Corinthian. (1 Cor. v. 3—5.) Timothy was charged, as having to answer to God for it in the day of judgment, to be impartial in his censure of

sinful elders ; but had this point been determined by a majority of elders, they must have been answerable for it, and not the evangelist. (1 Tim. v. 19—21.) Titus was charged to reject an obstinate heretic ; which he could not have done, had he merely presided in a meeting, in a majority of which the power of rejection was placed. Other examples might be given ; but these are more than sufficient.

As the governor of a church is responsible to the head of it for its external purity, he must possess the power of administering discipline on the factious. This power is reserved by our laws to our evangelists ; and it is a power which they cannot give up to any body of men, unless these men could procure a transfer of the responsibility to themselves. But that is impossible, since God has not left these matters to the option of his ministers : he has connected the duty with their office ; and however disagreeable to flesh and blood, (and there is no duty they have to perform so unpleasant as this,) they are bound in conscience, as they dread his displeasure, to discharge this duty with impartiality. When the venerable Wesley was traduced as a lover of power, and tyrannical, because he held the reins of discipline in his own hands ; his usual reply was, as may be seen in his writings, that God had laid it upon him, that he felt it as a great burden, and that he would gladly have resigned it to others, if he could have done so with a clear conscience. But to give our people the best security they can have against clandestine expulsions, the Conference have decreed that the guilt of the accused, whether he be an officer or a private member, shall be proved in the proper meeting, to the satisfaction of a majority of the brethren, before the superintendent can pronounce sentence. Beyond this, I have shown from the word of God, he is not authorised to go.

The result of this examination of scripture evidence, as it applies to the case in question, is plainly in favour of the Leeds superintendent. The evangelists of the New Testament, we have demonstrated, had jurisdic-

tion over local preachers, and all local officers, as well as private members; and to their discretion and impartiality is entrusted the penalty to be annexed to established guilt.

The next point in this case is to inquire, how far the superintendent has deviated from the laws of the land, and invaded the liberties of our free-born Englishmen. From the first the local brethren at Leeds appear to have been most active in opposition to their own preachers, and to the Conference. When at a proper local preachers' meeting the secretary of the illegal meetings was called to account, he neither denied that he had called and attended these meetings, nor that they were contrary to our rules; and instead of making any concession, he gloried in what he had done. In English law, when a man acknowledges the truth of the charge, the jury have nothing to try, and the judge proceeds to pass sentence. The precipitancy of the young man in confessing the violation of rule, left his brethren nothing to do; they could not deny the fact, in the face of his insolent avowal of it; and the superintendent felt that, under these circumstances, he must either resign his authority, or make an example of the offender:—he suspended him from office for a short period. A most dreadful clamour was raised against this act, as arbitrary, unconstitutional, popish, etc. Mr. Barr having quoted the rule, remarks, "Now from the rule itself it is evident, that the sentence could not be taken, as no penalty is attached to its non-observance."* Mr. Barr ought to have known that it is seldom any penalty is attached to our laws; and the reason is, because the degree of guilt connected with their violation depends so much upon circumstances, that many folios would be insufficient to mark the various shades of criminality, and to adjust the proper degrees of censure; it has been thought best, therefore, to leave this matter to the discretion of the superintendent. In the administration of justice

* Statement of Facts, p. 23.

in our courts of law, this is very much the case. The degree of punishment is not settled by the jury, but by the judge; and in many instances the law has entrusted a great deal to his discretion.

But it is further objected, "As in the laws of general pacification it is stated, that no local preacher shall be taken upon the plan, without the consent of the body, it is a fair presumption, that no local preacher can be expelled, and consequently not suspended, without their consent."* It is as good an argument to say, "As no local preacher shall be taken upon the plan without his own consent, so neither can he be suspended or expelled without his own consent." Once more, "As no gentleman can take a seat in the commons' house of parliament, without the consent of the electors, so neither can he be expelled without their consent." But in spite of this conclusive way of drawing consequences, members have been expelled without their constituents having been consulted.

And so Mr. Barr seriously thinks that the superintendent ought to have asked and obtained the consent of the other local preachers, before he inflicted the censure! He has told us also, in the preceding page, what the opinion of the local preachers was on this act of discipline. "The local preachers protested against such a measure, and contended that they ought, as a body, to be consulted upon the propriety of such a step, and declared that if any guilt attached to the conduct of the accused individual, which they denied, that every other local preacher who had taken part in the proceedings, was equally culpable; for that the condemned person had only acted in the capacity he had sustained, as secretary to the meetings, at their united request."† This is one of the most singular paragraphs ever penned. A person takes his trial for violating a certain law, pleads guilty, and a slight censure is passed upon him. Against this several of the jurors solemnly protest; they do not deny the fact, that the

* Statement of Facts, p. 23.

† Ibid., p. 22.

accused person had broken the law, but deny that any guilt attaches to his conduct, and insist that they ought to have been consulted on the propriety of awarding any punishment at all. But how do they make it out that no guilt attaches to this violation of law? Why because they "were equally culpable;" and what he had done was "at their united request!" Was impudence like this ever matched? They had employed him to break the law, and they would sit as jurors if he were brought to trial, and in spite of law, would screen him from the consequences of transgression; but when his effrontery left them nothing to try, and the court, knowing their participation in his guilt, did not choose to consult them on the sentence; why then they raise a hue and cry against the tyranny and oppression of the preachers!

Well, what was done next? Their oracle informs us, that "the view taken by the local preachers generally, of the suspension of one of their body, for doing an act in which they had all participated, was correct; they felt it an attack upon the whole of them; and they properly considered, that he was but the ostensible, and themselves the real party. It is then to the everlasting honour of from fifty to sixty of them, that they spontaneously resolved to consider the sentence of the suspended individual, their sentence, and his punishment, their punishment; and that they would preach no more until the sentence was revoked, or the period of punishment terminated."* Here is the spirit of our free-born Englishmen. Let us suppose something like this to transpire in the state. A man is accused of theft, and when brought to trial makes a full confession of his crime. In this case the jurors have nothing to do; and the court proceeds to sentence him to three months' imprisonment. At this, the foreman steps forward, and insists, that the jury ought to have been consulted on the measure of punishment, because "they had all participated" in the crime; that the

* Statement of Facts, p. 25.

sentence was "an attack upon the whole of them ; that he was but the ostensible, and they the real party ; that they had spontaneously resolved to consider his sentence, their sentence ; and his punishment, their punishment ; and that they would " accompany him to prison, and share in his confinement ! This would, no doubt, redound " to their everlasting honour ; " and I dare pledge myself, that the county would cheerfully supply them with bread and water, till they should recover their senses, and reform their manners.

But this subject must be viewed in another light. These preachers, it appears, had no sense of divine obligation resting on their consciences, to induce them to fulfil the ministry they had received ; but felt themselves quite at liberty to suspend their labours, without any call from either God or his church. These are a most singular sort of Protestants. Their ancestors did not act thus. Their conduct would have appeared in a very dubious light, if, when one of their number was silenced, the rest had all protested, that they would not speak another word in the name of the Lord, till he was restored. Instead of this, they continued at the hazard of their lives to labour after they were prohibited. But these new fangled protestants can preach or not, just as the whim seizes them. All feeling of duty and responsibility to God must have been extinct, before they could come to the rash determination to suspend their own labours.

We have seen in this transaction the state of their feelings in relation to Methodism, the itinerant preachers, and Almighty God ; it only remains to see how their hearts were affected towards the people. If the superintendent and Conference had offended these gentry, what had the people done, that they must be deprived of the means of grace ? The consequence of the voluntary suspension of the local preachers is thus explained by Mr. Barr : " Such a determination produced, of course, the greatest consternation among the travelling preachers, well knowing that many of the chapels would be almost unavoidably left without a

preacher." And that this might be the result, the local preachers kept their determination a secret as long as they could; so that it was only the day preceding the sabbath that the travelling preachers became apprised of it. And so these local preachers contrived, if possible, to deprive their congregations of the ministry and the other religious ordinances connected with it. If this be not taking the devil's part, I do not know what is. This shows better than volumes of professions could do, what hold the congregations had on the affections of these men. But then, the success of the scheme would have "produced the greatest consternation among the travelling preachers;" and no doubt, the greatest joy among the local preachers. And why this difference in the feelings of the two classes of preachers? I know of only one explanation: "The Protestants could jest, like infidels, with the religious feelings of their hearers; and our preachers felt anxiously concerned to promote their spiritual and eternal interests. Had the itinerants cared no more for the souls of the people than their calumniators did, instead of being seized with consternation, they could have joined in this Protestant laugh! Out of the mouth of your apologist we judge you, ye wicked servants. You must have been strangely infatuated, to think that you were bound in conscience to leave us, and unite with men who could make your privation of spiritual ordinances, matter of profane mirth!

But the special district meeting! None of our writers, it is said, have ventured upon a defence of that! So far from this being true, we have scarcely a writer who has omitted it. Mr. Watson has demonstrated that a constitution like ours, cannot subsist without something of the sort, but must crumble into independent churches; and none of his opponents have dared to grapple with his main arguments. Mr. Welch, too, has taken up the same line of argument in a most masterly style; and your champions have deemed it prudent to let him alone. And Mr. Beecham has proved beyond successful contradiction, that special district

meetings are strictly Methodistical. I have already noticed two of the principal particulars objected to the Leeds meeting, the sanction they gave to the test and to the suspension of the local preacher; and I have said enough, I hope, to satisfy any reasonable mind that upon these points the preachers of the special district meeting do not merit censure, but are entitled to praise.

It is contended, however, that the meeting was illegally constituted; the president having invited persons who had no right to attend, and the superintendent having invited three distant, instead of three of the nearest superintendents. Had the meeting, thus constituted, tried the offenders, I think the act would have been illegal; but they did no such thing; they merely gave advice to the superintendent, as to the mode of trial; and attended the trial of two or three of the disaffected, without presuming to give a vote. What was there illegal in this? Has not a superintendent a right to ask advice of any of his brethren, in a case of difficulty? I hope he will not be denied this privilege by free-born Englishmen. We all know how common it is for a judge to consult his brethren on intricate subjects. And what law was violated by the mere presence of the preachers at these trials? None whatever, either divine or human.

Your people it appears, however, from recent occurrences have adopted a much more expeditious method of dealing with officers and members who are deemed refractory. Some time ago a leader of your connexion at Holbeck, near this town, for some cause, was deprived of his office and membership. Some time after he commenced meeting in class, and was admitted a private member. Afterwards he was proposed as a fit person to be again a leader, and was elected by a large majority of the leaders' meeting; only one or two being opposed to him. A leader of the Holbeck society complained to the quarterly meeting against this re-election; and the meeting decreed, and wrote to the Holbeck leaders, that they had done wrong in putting this person again into office, and that his re-election was void. The

Holbeck leaders were not enlightened by such logic, and refused to undo what they had done. When the proper season arrived, an elder from Leeds, a great stickler, no doubt, for the liberties of Englishmen, attended at Holbeck to renew the society's tickets. When he came to the class of the re-elected leader, he refused tickets to him and all his members. The Holbeck leaders were highly indignant at this mode of treatment of one of their members and his class, and held a parley with the meek-spirited elders of Leeds, at the last quarterly meeting: but these gentlemen, partly by threats, that they could convert the Holbeck society into an independent church, and partly by promises, that the affair should be presented for final adjudication to the next yearly meeting, obtained a trifling majority in favour of a despotic act which never had its equal in our connexion. Neither the leader nor his members were tried by a leaders' meeting, or received any notice of trial before any tribunal whatever. Thus the matter stands at present. My authorities for the above facts are quite satisfactory. A few remarks on them may be proper.

With the fitness or unfitness for his office, of the leader in question, I have nothing to do. Suppose, if you please, that he is every way qualified for it; and then the injustice of the treatment he has received is vividly apparent. If you suppose him to be unworthy, you see the necessity of a controlling power somewhere, to correct the errors of subordinate jurisdictions, and to bring them into harmony with the general system. That is the business of our special district meetings; and you cannot object to these, if you imitate them. But your laws have not vested any such power in any class of officers. The great outcry from the beginning to the end of the answer to Mr. Watson, by your London brethren, is, that the local authorities ought to be maintained inviolate. But here the decision of a leaders' meeting is annulled by a message from a quarterly meeting. Though you have made no provision for such a case in your laws, yet you have no

sooner set your system to work, than you find it cannot go on, without the intervention of an authority similar to that against which you have been protesting. And though Mr. Watson's argument, that the want of all power of revision of local decisions must issue in independency, has been publicly denied in the boldest manner, yet we perceive from the threat held out to the Holbeck leaders that your rulers feel his argument to be conclusive.

And this case is to be referred to the yearly meeting ! But your laws have given no judicial authority to that august assembly. And have you forgotten that two of the chief reasons of the division were, that we allow a power to special district meetings, in certain cases, to settle differences which the local authorities cannot ; and to the Conference to receive final appeals. And now your masters have discovered the secret, that they cannot keep you together for a single year, without having recourse to similar means !

The quarterly ticket is the token of membership, and the withholding of it is the mode of expulsion. The rule says, p. 12, " The mode of excluding a private member, shall be by withholding the ensuing quarterly ticket." As this token of membership was withheld from the leader, as well as from his members, he was excluded the society, as a member ; and as no man can be a leader who is not a member, he was put out of office as well as out of society, by the same act. Now look at this case. Here is a leader and his class all turned out of society by a single elder, without any trial at all ; and the quarterly meeting approve the arbitrary act ! And all this in the face of rules which require that " private members of society shall be tried by the leaders' meeting ;" that " on the appointment or trial of leaders, the leaders alone shall be allowed to vote ;" and that " to prevent everything like unfair or clandestine expulsions" of leaders, a certain process of trial is ordained, adapted to secure justice to the accused. But all these enactments are swept away, like a spider's web, by the hand of a single elder. Here is your glorious liberty !

If there were any sinners in this business, they were the Holbeck leaders, and not the leader and members who were expelled. Just examine the case a moment. These leaders were hectored by the quarterly meeting for re-electing their brother. Neither he nor his members can be blamed for the act of the leaders' meeting, which placed him over them. The leaders refused to depose him; and how could he or his members be blamed for that? If the elder, therefore, thought himself authorized to visit the offence with excision, the contumacious leaders were evidently the offenders, and not the party who suffered; these received no message from the quarterly meeting, no notice of trial, no summons to appear before any tribunal, no trial of any sort; they were cut off by a single elder; the leader, because he would not resign his office at the bidding of this important personage; and the members, because they would not abandon a leader placed over them by their own leaders' meeting, and not legally deposed.

You have seen much in your Magazine from time to time, of the blessed spirit of union and love which prevail in your meetings, and of the mighty power of God, which rests on your assemblies, now that you are emancipated from the thralldom of the old connexion; and there is much of this cant in the number for the present month; but no notice is taken in this truth-telling periodical, of the heavenly tempers, and the heavenly language, which flowed with amazing rapidity up to the midnight hour, in your last quarterly meeting, while this subject was under debate.

Before we have any more blustering on the Leeds case, as your people call it, we shall have some explanation, I hope, of the Holbeck case. Compare the timidity of more than twenty of our preachers, in confining themselves to mere advice, with the despotic air of your elder, who alone, and at a single blow, audaciously strikes out of your society a whole class with their leader. The advice offered by our preachers was sound and good; they saw no necessity for setting aside the

ordinary tribunals ; they only recommended a test for the purgation of the jurors. No judge would allow a jury to try a prisoner, if he knew that some of them were his partners in guilt. He would try to get a honest jury ; and he would not be deterred from this by the clamour of the disaffected, in calling it a packed jury. In our case, no law was set aside ; in yours, every law applicable to the subject was fearlessly trampled upon.

Our people, generally, are warmly attached to Methodism, and require much dexterous drilling to prepare them to turn their backs upon it. You were warned from the first, that your seducers were driving at this point ; but this was denied in the most solemn manner. Mr. Watson had charged the London protestors with a design to make a separation. In the review of their reply, which appeared in the Protestant Magazine for September last, it is said, " The pamphlet proceeds to repel the charge of a factious desire of innovation which Mr. Watson had thrown out ; a charge which it successfully refutes, stating, in the words of former publications from that circuit, ' We do not yield, even to the Conference itself, in ardent attachment to the constitution and discipline of the connexion, as laid down by Mr. Wesley ; we wish for no changes in the system of Methodism ; but we are content and satisfied with that system as it has long been established in this circuit. These solemn declarations of a whole circuit, attested by the signatures of the circuit stewards in the first instance, and subsequently by those of 104 officers of the church, many of them of the highest character, for respectability, piety, and long standing in the societies, will, we think, have weight with the connexion.' Yet all this attestation, was, it seems, inadequate to gain the credit of truth with Mr. Watson." And Mr. Watson was right ; for in spite of all these protestations and attestations, as soon as they had succeeded in alienating the affections of a few of the people, they threw off the mask, and went away.

Now let us hear what Mr. Barr had to say in reply to

a similar charge against the Leeds agitators: "A strong effort is making on the part of the preachers, both from the pulpit and the press, to induce the societies to believe that those who are resisting the arbitrary proceedings of Conference, are wishful to create a division, and to establish another religious body. Of all the vile insinuations employed by the preachers to calumniate them, not one is further from the truth than this." I am glad of that, Mr. Barr; for, since the event has shown that they spoke the truth in this instance, it follows, that all they have said of the Protestants is as true as the gospel. Mr. B. was so confident that the preachers were mistaken in surmising that his friends intended "to establish another religious body," that he turned prophet upon it: "I tell the preachers in Leeds, and their bad advisers, that in all this they will be disappointed." * Mr. B. wishes "the dissentients to be judged by their actions." Very proper, sir. But what can the most candid person in the world make of all these solemn and awful protestations, when he compares them with the facts, that a separation has actually been made by them, and that the new system differs essentially from every form which Methodism had ever previously assumed? I leave such professions and conduct to make their proper impression on your minds, and am,—

Yours,

Affectionately and faithfully,

D. ISAAC.

LEEDS, *May* 28, 1830.

P. S. As the Protestants cannot answer the arguments contained in my former letter, they are trying to console themselves by defaming my character. They are now circulating, with the greatest

* Facts, p. 49.

impudence and indulgence, that I have abandoned the principles of church government contained in my "Ecclesiastical Claims." They have the assurance to represent me as denying, in that work, "that any order of men existed in the primitive church, superior to elders." Compare this with the following paragraph, which is in perfect accordance with the sentiments contained in the letter: "The presbyters were subject to the evangelists, or itinerant preachers, such as Timothy and Titus. And the Methodist leaders are subject to the itinerant preachers."† Throughout that book, presbyters, elders, and bishops, are taken for the same class of officers; and there is, what I still think, a very conclusive argument to show, that the elders of the New Testament answer to the leaders of the Methodist connexion. My opponents would not invent and propagate such glaring falsehoods, if the desperate state of their cause did not, in their esteem, require it. I have crushed the head of the serpent; and I am not surprised that in his writings he attempts to bite my heel.

LETTER III.

Further Remarks on the Conduct of the Protestant Methodists, in a Third Letter to the Private Members of that Community; with a Postscript, in which some replies to the Former Letters are noticed.

RESPECTED FRIENDS,

IN my last, I showed that you had no just cause of separation from the old connexion. The real cause is stated by the apostle John; and he attaches blame to the dissentients. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (1 John ii. 19.) Alienation of affection was the seat of the disease which produced such baneful effects at Leeds. Could that leader love his brethren who scarcely ever, for years, attended a leaders' meeting, except when strife was stirring? Could those leaders love Methodism, who would rather abandon it than express their approbation of it? Could

† Eccles. Claims, p. 104, new edition.

those preachers love either their divine Master, or their work, or the people, who abstain from their holy employment without any call from God or man, and endeavoured to deprive their congregations of the means of grace? Could your law-makers entertain any regard for the plan of discipline left by Mr. Wesley, when, having withdrawn from us, and being at liberty to follow the devices and desires of their own hearts, they composed an ecclesiastical code more at variance with Wesleyan Methodism than with Romanism? Had their hearts been right, there was nothing in the Leeds case at which they would have stumbled. "If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

It may afford us some consolation to know, that your ringleaders were as much disaffected to all other denominations of christians, as to us. There was not a church in christendom with which they could unite. All were viewed in the spirit of bigotry, and their fellowship declined. The modesty of these super-eminent pious and learned divines permitted them to believe, that they could produce an ecclesiastical code superior to any which had hitherto been constructed since the days of the apostles; and which, of course, as some of them have since boasted, should eventually supercede all others, and work the conversion and salvation of the world. My first letter has considerably lowered their tone; and one of their advocates, not daring to encounter my objections, remarks, "I do not mean to say, that in every respect our regulations are perfect; for there are things which I am free to confess, I do not approve."* The fact is, these humble souls possess the spirit of "Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence." (3 John ix. 10.) They have, therefore, contrived a scheme in which themselves are to be all in all. If the tyranny of the preachers were the principal cause of their secession, as they have so repeatedly affirmed, why did they not join the new connexion? Their preachers

* Glover's Address, p. 24.

are not accused of possessing, or exercising, too much power. If these would not suit them, they might have gone over to the Ranters, whose itinerants are in pretty much the same condition with their own. If they wanted to be free from an hired ministry, the door of the Independent Methodists was open to them. If church Methodism had any attractions,—and they recommend you to go to the clergy for the sacraments, the Hibernians would have received them with open arms. If a modification of church Methodism, suited to the atmosphere of England, could have satisfied them, a Beverley reformer, who had been employed for years in concocting such a scheme, and who, in his own conceit, at least, had brought it to perfection, would, no doubt, have cheerfully supplied their wants for a halfpenny—the price of many a constitution which was issued during the ferment of the French revolution. As this mighty genius thought himself clever enough to ride in a whirlwind and direct the storm, he visited Leeds during the tempest; but he found the saddle so crowded with other master spirits, that there was no room left for him, even on the tail; and he was obliged to retire, rather in dudgeon. Nothing less than a new sect, with themselves at the head of it, would satisfy these bashful Protestants; and I have shown, I hope, how admirably well they are qualified to legislate for the church of Christ. I have read much of the productions of ignorance and impudence; but I never saw the two united in perfection, till I read the “Rules of the Societies of the Wesleyan Protestant Methodists.”

As a specimen of the assurance, incapacity, and bigotry of your legislators, take the following instance: “No ordination shall take place in our connexion, nor shall gowns or bands be used among us; nor the title of reverend be used at all. And if any brother shall break this rule, he thereby excludes himself from the connexion.”*

* Rules, p. 15.

Whatever a person's weaknesses and infirmities may be, he ought not to be expelled from the church, if they be not of sufficient magnitude to shut him out of heaven. The apostle requires the church to receive a man who is weak in the faith, because the Lord has received him. (Rom. xiv. 1—3.) From which it is manifest, that no church has authority to expel a member whom the Lord does not reject. To suppose the contrary, involves the monstrous absurdity, that a person may be good enough for the society of saints and angels in heaven, who is unfit for the fellowship of the church upon earth. This law, therefore, can only be defended on the supposition, that ordination to the ministry, the wearing of gowns and bands, and the giving or taking the title of reverend, are damnable sins. This consigns over to the devil at once all the clergy of the establishment. And how few of our dissenting brethren will escape! for many of them use ordination, and gowns, and bands; and all of them, I believe, use the word, reverend. But two considerations magnified these trifles into soul-destroying sins. 1. Some of the Wesleyan preachers have latterly manifested a liking to these things; and their traducers would run the risk, in order to throw an anathema at their heads, of sinking both churchmen and dissenters into the bottomless pit. 2. The legislators knew that, as secular men, the courtesy of the country would not allow them to indulge in these fine things: and as they were determined to rule their preachers, it must, of course, be an unpardonable offence for the servants to assume tokens of dignity which their masters could not use without being laughed at.

According to these profound divines, Mr. Wesley would have excluded himself from their heavenly society; for he was ordained, and used gowns and bands, and the shocking word, reverend. It is true he advised his preachers, as a matter of prudence, to abstain from the use of this term; but he had more sense and grace than to employ any threats of excommunication as the penalty of disobedience. He also ordained some of his

preachers, and allowed them to wear gowns and bands; and very fine, I dare say, they looked in them. I am no admirer of these things, as is well known; but God forbid that I should unchristian any man on account of them!

But if the word reverend cannot be used by any but reprobates, how happens it that such saints as these law-makers should themselves be involved in this guilt? for in these very rules, p. 4, we read twice of the reverend John Wesley. And no scruple is made of using the word many times in the Protestant Magazines which have been published since the law was made; though that law expressly declares that the obnoxious term shall not "be used at all." And it must be particularly noted, that these legislators, having used this heretical term in their book of laws, they did "thereby exclude themselves from the connexion," and render their spiritual code void. The monster, at its birth, destroyed both its parents and itself. Suppose our king and parliament were to pass a law by which they excluded themselves from the state, it would necessarily follow, that neither themselves nor their laws could have any authority in the state; and the whole frame of society would be dissolved. You see into what a condition these wiseacres have brought both you and themselves! Since the publication of my first letter, many persons have been desirous of seeing your famous rules; but have complained that they could not obtain a copy for either love or money.

I must now advert to another topic upon which our calumniators are perpetually harping,—the enormous salaries of the preachers, and their incessant cravings for money. In your Magazine for January last, a most violent philippic against our preachers, as a set of mercenary wretches, is headed with,—

"Money, money's all my cry;
Oh, give me money, or I die!"

Upon this subject your holy and heavenly guides seem to have acted upon the old proverb, "Throw dirt

enough and some will stick." Nothing they have said against us has been so successful in alienating your affections from us, and in prejudicing your minds against us, as the perpetual outcry which they have kept up about our avarice. The gross and abominable falsehoods they have published upon this head shall now be exposed ; and though I have little hope that what I may say will make much impression on their tender minds, it may serve to open your eyes, and certainly will enable the public to judge how far the reproach and calumny we have endured have been deserved.

In your Magazine for March last year there is a letter from an anonymous scribbler on the " Income of Methodist preachers ;" in which he says, " It appears there are at present in Great Britain, Ireland, and Foreign stations, 304,871 members in society ; and if each member contributes, as is required, one penny per week, and one shilling per quarter, ticket money, it will produce an annual income of £127,028 15s. To which may be added the following funds, all which are appropriated to the support of the preachers and their families :—

	£	s.	d.
Missionaries at home and abroad	43,000	0	0
Yearly and July collections	8,600	0	0
Woodhouse Grove and Kingswood Schools, collections and subscriptions	8,400	0	0
Allowances from circuits for Children ..	6,000	0	0
Subscriptions to Legalized and Auxiliary Preachers' Fund	2,000	0	0
Profits of Book Room	3,000	0	0
	<hr/> £198,028 15 0 <hr/>		

"Now supposing the number of preachers, traveling, supernumerary, and superannuated to be 1,146, it is quite clear there is an annual income to each, of £173."

The writer then proceeds to complain of the inequality of the allowances in different circuits, and proposes, as a remedy, that the above sum of £198,028

15s. shall be lodged in the hands of a banker in London ; that the allowances per annum be for every travelling, supernumerary, and superannuated preacher, £100., for every wife and widow, £50., for every child until eighteen years of age £20.; that the claimants draw upon the banker quarterly for a fourth part of their annual stipends; and that the preachers shall have no additional claims upon the circuits for houses, or anything else. There is not a preacher in the connexion, I am persuaded, who would object to this scheme. The reformers, I fear, however, would find it difficult to procure a banker who would guarantee to the preachers the due payment of the above sums. Had I been paid according to this ratio for the thirty years I have travelled, I should have been at this day near £1,000 richer than I happen to be in consequence of having received my salary upon the old plan.

In favour of the equality system the writer argues as follows : “ I would just ask those reverend influential preachers, how they can reconcile the idea of themselves receiving, perhaps double the amount of an equally excellent and valuable preacher, who is travelling in a small country circuit, where there is probably more labour and fewer comforts ; how much justice, equity, or reason is there in such conduct ? how does this accord with the golden rule, ‘ Do ye unto others as ye would that they should do unto you ? ’ ”

This is all very pious and good, as far as it goes. But why does the writer limit the operations of his levelling system to our preachers ? The equality which prevailed in the apostles’ time was general throughout the church at Jerusalem. “ And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul ; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own ; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked ; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles’ feet ; and distribution was made unto every man ac-

ording as he had need." (Acts iv. 32 — 35.) In this case the laity left their property, not in the hands of a city banker, but at the feet of the ministers of religion. What an outcry would our Protestants, had they existed at the time, have raised against this! Their writer, however, instead of trying the experiment upon so large a scale, is for restricting it to a single profession. But are not your ministers under as great an obligation as ours are, to have all things in common? It scarcely looks decent for your preachers to be pressing upon us what they think to be a sacred duty, and yet pay no attention to it themselves. Some of your ministers are possessed of both houses and lands; and every one of the rest may sing in a plaintiff tone,—

"No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in the wilderness."

It is well known how dead your chief pastors are to all carnal things. Now I would advise your poor preachers to apply to them to set an example; and when they have sold their lands and houses, and made distribution of the price to every poverty-stricken brother, "according as he has need," we will try to emulate their virtues. That your teachers should seriously, solemnly, religiously, and with all possible gravity, insist upon our doing, what, in similar circumstances, they will not do themselves, would, I should have thought, had I not known something of the men, have exceeded all power of face. But the pharisees of old, I read, could bind burdens upon others, which they themselves would not touch with one of their fingers.

But to return to the pecuniary calculations of this writer. He takes it for granted that our members average 2s. 1d. per quarter for ticket and class money. If he had known the real state of things among us, he would have known that they do no such thing. He also assumes that the whole of this money is paid to, and for, the preachers. This is one of the most gross

and impudent falsehoods ever attempted to be imposed upon human credulity. As this is a serious charge, attend to the proof; and if I fail to substantiate it, rank me amongst the basest libelers that ever disgraced human nature. Your people pay class and ticket money as well as ours; and the whole of this money in your connexion, is expended on the incidentals of your worship, and not in paying the salaries of your ministers. You know that no religious community can exist without incurring expenses, independently of what may be paid to ministers; when, therefore, the whole receipts of our connexion are stated, by this writer, to be expended upon the preachers, you cannot reflect on the subject for a moment without being satisfied that the statement is false.

To show that the whole of your class and ticket money is disposed of in the way I have asserted, I will refer you to the published accounts of your stewards. These accounts are published half-yearly, and are entitled, "An account of the receipts and expenditure by the Stewards of the Wesleyan Protestant Methodist Society, Leeds, for six months." I have two of these papers before me, and by adding the items together under each separate head, I herewith present you with a statement of the stewards' accounts for a whole year, ending September 28th, 1829:—

Dr. Cash.	£.	s.	d.	Per Contra Cr.	£.	s.	d.
To Balance in hand, September Quarter				By Expenses at the four Quarter Days	25	11	2
Day [1828] - -	36	10	10½	By Insurance - -	4	17	8
To Class Money -	127	0	5	By Chapel-keepers' Wages - - - -	24	6	6
To Ticket Money -	84	19	4½	By Sundry Wages -	5	1	6
To Plan Do. -	3	16	9	By Singers' Do. -	6	5	0
To Donation, by a Friend - - - -	2	0	0	By Whitewashing, Colouring, Clean- ing, Floor Cloths, Glazing, etc. - -	13	13	3
To Cash received from Holbeck -	5	14	10	By Wine and Biscuits	5	3	2
To Cash from Loft- house and Wood- house - - - -	0	7	6	By Coals, Sand, Can- dles, Windows re- pairing, etc. - -	22	18	10
To Cash from Farn- ley - - - - -	2	5	5				
			s s 3				

	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
To Do. from Moor- town - - -	3	11	6	By Seats for the Ro- tation Office - -	3	10	0
To Cash from Keigh- ley - - - -	4	10	0	By Postages - - -	3	2	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
To Cash from Burley	3	18	0	By Stationery, Print- ing, etc. - - -	40	15	11
To Do. from Morley	1	8	0	By Allowance to Farn- ley Society - - -	0	15	0
To Do. from Yeadon	2	0	6	By Coach-fares, Horse- hire, Travelling Ex- penses, etc. - -	96	12	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
To Do. from Drig- lington - - -	0	12	0	By two Water Casks	0	6	0
To Cash from Round- hay - - - -	0	17	4	By Rent and Licences	7	12	6
To Cash from Harro- gate - - - -	5	2	0	By Alterations and Repairs - - -	22	19	10
To Cash from Huns- let - - - -	1	14	3	By Trustees - - -	10	0	0
To Cash from Barns- ley (for horse hire)	7	12	0	By Magazine Com- mittee (a Loan) -	5	0	0
To Cash from York	2	0	0				
To Do. from Whitley	1	0	0				
To Do. from Head- ingley - - - -	1	10	6				
To Balance due to the Stewards - - -	0	1	8				
	<u>£298</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>		<u>* £298</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>

Now look at the above statement. You see here is more than the whole of the class and ticket money disbursed, without one farthing of it being appropriated to the salary of a minister. Yet in the face of this, it is spread abroad through the land in your veritable production, that all the money raised among us for religious purposes is divided among the preachers. Your Leeds society can spend about £300. per annum in incidentals; and the thousands of societies in our connexion are not allowed one farthing for any such purposes; but the voracious preachers are supposed to swallow up everything! But if our people can do

* There is a small error in this total sum, which appears 1s. 10d. more than the several items amount to. The mistake occurs in the second half-yearly statement. But as I have no means of correcting it, and as it is a trifle of no moment to me, I have left it just as I found it.

without incidentals, so may yours; and then in exacting class and ticket money of you, your leaders are imposing upon you at a fine rate. As your people have talked so eloquently on using the most rigid economy in disposing of the hard-earned pittances received from the poor members of society, I hope they will not object to our incidental expenses being paid from the same fund as their own, and in the same proportion. We have seen that no part of your class and ticket money has been appropriated to the support of ministers; but the whole of it, with the addition of "plan money," and a liberal donation from a friend, has been expended upon other matters. Suppose our class and ticket money were disposed of, like yours, in incidentals; and as this, according to the letter writer, amounts to £127,028, which he has included in the sum total shared among the preachers, it must be deducted from that sum, which we have seen is £198,028, and then the remainder, £71,000, is all we have left to divide among 1,146 preachers, which will average for each nearly £62. a year.

But this is not all. The letter writer supposes that the whole receipts for the missions are expended upon the missionaries. He could not, however, be ignorant, unless he be an idiot, a point which I will not stop to dispute, that considerable sums are devoted to objects, which, though connected with the institution, form no part of the missionaries' salaries. There are the rent and taxes and rates of the mission premises in London; the wages of the servants employed at that establishment; the expense of printing notices, quarterly papers, and general reports; the grants made to schools and chapels, etc. I am quite sure it is much under the truth to estimate these at £4,000. And there is yet an item of £6,000 in his account, under the head of "allowance from circuits for children," which must be expunged from it. The whole income received by the circuit stewards he states to be 2s. 1d. each member per quarter, every farthing of which he supposes to be paid by the stewards to the preachers. I demand

of him, in the name of common sense, how the stewards could pay £6,000 for children, when they had paid the whole of their receipts before "to the support of the preachers and their families?" That the stewards did actually pay the £6,000 I do not dispute; but it is manifest they must have paid it out of the ticket and class money; for he does not assign them any other fund for that purpose. Grasping as the preachers are supposed to be after money, how they can receive £6,000 more than their people give, I am not able to divine. This sum then is charged to the preachers twice by the letter writer; it is first included in the class and ticket money, and then charged separately. These two sums, amounting to £10,000, must therefore be deducted from the above £71,000; and the remainder, £61,000, when equally distributed among 1,146 preachers, will make the salary for each, amount to £53. 4s. 6d. per annum! This is the utmost our preachers could receive, were our stewards, like yours, to devote the whole of the class and ticket money to other purposes. I am far from thinking, however, that the salaries of our preachers do not average more than £53., because I am aware that our stewards are not so profligate as yours are in the expenditure of the money which comes into their hands. These traducers of our character may suppose we receive as much more than £53. 4s. 6d. as they please; because the more they assign to us, the less our stewards will have for other purposes, and the more extravagant in comparison, will the expenditure of your stewards appear: they cannot, therefore, strike at us, without wounding themselves.

Suppose your people had by extra exertion raised £12. more in the course of the last year; and given them to a missionary, or travelling preacher; why then according to their mode of calculating our salaries, their minister would have received £310. a year; because that sum had actually come into the hands of the stewards. How can quarter day dinners, insurance, chapel-keepers' wages, singers' wages, etc., be convert-

ed into preachers' income? Our people have these expenses to bear, as well as yours have; and they are just as much the wages of your missionaries as of our preachers. If our stewards were not more economical than yours are in the incidental expenses of worship, instead of having hundreds a year, as your writers pretend, we should not be able to procure bread and water. Your quarter day dinners cost £25. 11s. 2d; ours, £16. 19s. 6½d; and our circuit contains many more members than yours. Your local preachers' horse hire, coach fares, and travelling expenses, amount to the enormous sum of £96. 12s. 4½d;* ours, for the

* We shall perhaps be told that much of this has been expended by journeys to distant places, to preach the glorious gospel of peace. How these missions are executed we have a specimen in the Magazine for December last, which contains an account of a visit of two of the brethren to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. They held "a public meeting in Butchers' Hall. A statement of the facts connected with the Leeds case was given, which appeared to make a deep impression on the minds of the persons present; so much so, that it was difficult to prevent them from expressing, by outward manifestation, their astonishment and disgust, at the conduct of the Conference preachers." The writer goes on to inform us of "the universality of such feelings, whenever that conduct is fairly stated." Their principal business at Newcastle was, it seems, to collect a mob, and harangue them on the wickedness of Methodist preachers, till their feelings were wound up to the highest pitch. They carried the thing rather too far, it appears; as the orators were obliged to change their tone, and found "it difficult to prevent them from expressing, by outward manifestation," the feelings excited in their hearts respecting the ministers of the old connexion. What is meant by this "outward manifestation," we are left to conjecture. It could not consist in talking against us; for the rabble had as much right to do that, as these spouters; and it seems to have been the chief design of their address to excite the bad passions of their auditors against us. The "outward manifestation," had it taken place, must have been something horrible, when these disgusting preachers felt it necessary, and found it "difficult," to allay the storm they had raised. Were the mob going off in a body to give vent, upon the persons of the preachers, to the "astonishment and disgust" they felt at their conduct? This is not a solitary instance; for we are assured of "the universality of such feelings" being excited by similar addresses. This is the way, then, in which your money flies. These ambassadors

same period, does not exceed £16. 15s. You have another item for stationery and printing, £40. 15s. 11d.

of heaven are galloping up and down the country, and holding public meetings, to inspire people with "astonishment and disgust at the conduct of the Conference preachers." This, it seems, is the glorious gospel which they preach: the glad tidings of great joy which they bring to all people, is, that the Conference preachers are a disgusting set of mercenaries. This is, at least, a new method of persuading men to love God and their fellow-creatures, and "to keep their tongues from evil speaking." By such means as these they "promote the work of God," as they term it! You must surely be convinced that your money is much better employed in sending men on such errands, than it was, when you devoted it to the service of God in the old connexion. I am disposed to think that the persons who have been present at such meetings would have felt some little "astonishment and disgust" at these heavenly teachers, had they told them the whole truth, while declaiming against our organs and liturgies, and frankly avowed that they had gotten both, snugly foisted into their own connexion! But they had, no doubt, prudence enough to keep this part of the Leeds most distressing case to themselves.

When Wesley went forth to preach salvation to a ruined world, he adopted another plan. He had no notion that God had sent him to vilify other ministers, to sow the seeds of dissention in their churches, and to create strife and debate and division. Instead of attempting to destroy other religious communities, and to raise a church of his own on their ruins, he went into the world, and preached to lost sinners the unsearchable riches of Christ. If he can look down from heaven, what "astonishment and disgust" must he feel "at the conduct" of those preachers who, in his name, as Wesleyan Protestant Methodists, are endeavouring to distract and destroy the churches of Christ which he founded! Among the seven things which the Lord doth hate and abominate, the last is, "He that soweth discord among brethren." (Prov. vi. 16—19.)

It is not merely the Methodist societies which your people endeavour to disturb. Some disaffected persons belonging to another sect in Newark afforded a most tempting bait, which they could not resist. "Two of the brethren from Leeds were sent;" and their success is thus reported in their Magazine for January, 1829. "There is a small neat chapel, with a society of from thirty to forty members, with a fair prospect of considerable extension. For the prosperity of the work of God" in this and other places, their people are desired to pray. From which we learn, that getting a chapel and members from another community is doing the work of God. So at Walls-end, they nearly, if not quite, broke up a society of Ranters, and boast in their Magazine for

If our stewards were to throw away their money at this rate, they would soon become bankrupt.

In the Protestant Magazine for May last year, there is a letter from J. A., of York, in which he gives an account of the expenditure of the circuit stewards for a year; which he estimates at £946. 14s. 8d., and remarks upon it: "The preachers, three in number, each receives from £140. to £150. in cash, besides house rent, taxes, coals, candles, furniture, linen, servants, washing, postages of letters, stationery, horses, tolls, and other travelling expenses, wear and tear in furniture, linen, pots, glass, etc., all found them and paid for by the societies." He evidently wishes his readers to conclude that the three preachers, in cash paid them and expended upon them, share the whole receipts among them; which would average £315. 11s. 6d. for each of them. I object among the items enumerated by J. A., as forming no part of the salaries of the preachers, to postages, stationery, horses, tolls, and other travelling expenses. In the expenditure of the Protestants, there are postages £3. 2s. 4½d.; stationery and printing £40. 15s. 11d.; coach fares, horse hire, and travelling expenses, £96. 12s. 4½d. These three items alone amount to £140. 10s. 8d. Did the persons who received these sums from the stewards consider them in the light of wages or salaries? In this way of making up salaries, it might easily be shown that a wagoner receives some thousands a year. He cannot

December last, that "they are in possession of a neat and commodious chapel, unincumbered with debt." This is promoting the work of God with a witness. Yet notwithstanding the bold face put upon these things, I think I see some latent evidences of shame. When they have succeeded in rending one of our societies, the fact is stated most exultingly; but in both these instances they have omitted to mention what sect was their prey. No fish comes amiss to their net, and in troubled waters they are most successful.

If your money be expended upon such missions as these, you ought to consider what sort of a reward you are likely to receive of the Lord, for thus helping forward, what is strangely called his work!

do his work without a wagon and horses. Suppose he drive a stage-wagon from Leeds to London; how many sets of horses will he want on the road? and what will be the amount of expenses for turnpikes, stoppages at inns, etc.? The whole concern may cost some thousands; and yet the man who manages it may not receive more than £20. or £30. in the shape of salary. J. A. omitted to notice, upon this subject, that two horses are required for working the York circuit. The expense of these the stewards have to pay; and whatever they minister to a preacher's comfort, they certainly form no part of his salary. But suppose the York stewards had been like yours, and spent the whole of their class and ticket money upon other things, their preachers would not have had salary enough to purchase bread and water.

Now then, with the exceptions noted above, I will speak to J. A.'s calculations. I have travelled twice in the York circuit, two years each time; the first time I was single, the last time I was married; and I boldly affirm that the whole cost I was at to the society during these four years, including what they paid to me and for me, did not exceed £370.; and my belief is, not so much by many pounds. In this calculation I include board, quarterage for myself, wife, and, servant, washing, rent, taxes, rates, coals, candles, medicine, and wear and tear of furniture; and I fearlessly appeal to the stewards' books in confirmation of the truth of my statement. If the friends in York, therefore, raised money enough to enable their stewards to expend upon me £315. 11s. 6d. a year, a sum which J. A. insinuates each preacher costs them, I charge the stewards with cheating me out of near £900.

In the Protestant Magazine for August last, we have another of those assertions respecting the salaries of the preachers, which I find impossible to reconcile with the slightest regard to truth. "We have been informed by a very upright and intelligent man, who is well qualified to form a correct opinion on the subject, that the support of the Conference preachers, (one of

whom is an unmarried man,) and their families, of the two Leeds circuits, does not cost the societies of that town less than £2,000 per annum." The writer then goes on to declaim against "seven preachers of the Conference connexion being supported at so enormous an expense." This is certainly a very handsome sum for seven men to share amongst them. As the salaries of the preachers are proportioned to their wants, the single man would cost the society comparatively little. They would merely provide for his board, quarterage, washing, postage, travelling expenses, and perhaps a trifle for books. It is supposing these allowances to have been upon the most liberal scale, if we estimate their amount at £80. The six married men, therefore, would receive in money, and money worth, just £340. each, per annum. As I am now in the Leeds west circuit, I can meet the traducer as boldly as I have encountered J. A. respecting the preachers' salaries in York. I esteem it fortunate, or rather providential, that I have travelled in two of the circuits which have been fixed upon to show the monstrous amount of the preachers' income. Now I confidently affirm, that the whole of what the Leeds society expend upon me does not amount to half this sum! And if our stewards were not more economical than yours are in their expenses, but devoted the whole of the class and ticket money to other purposes than the maintenance of their ministers, they would not have as much left for us as would amount to jail allowance.

But on what authority is the statement made, that the preachers of the two circuits cost the societies £2,000. annually? Why, we are told by an anonymous writer in the Magazine, that he has received an opinion to that effect from a person who is "very upright and intelligent;" but this very honest and sagacious informer, it seems, must remain anonymous also. It is plain enough, then, that this upright man had not seen the stewards' books; for information derived from such a source is not opinion but knowledge. He had formed his opinion, probably on such visionary calculations

as I have already shown have no foundation in truth. It is on such statements as these you are taught to believe what vile avaricious wretches the Conference preachers are !

On the cover of the Protestant Magazine for December last, it is asserted that "most of the preachers' incomes already average about £300. per annum." Your writers are most marvellous calculators. One of them comes forward in a preceding number of the Magazine, as we have seen, and cannot swell the average above £173., though it is made upon his own calculations of the income of the whole connexion, and which I have demonstrated is much higher than truth will warrant. The most stupidly ignorant cannot but know that every religious society must incur expenses which cannot be included in the salary of its minister. And the fact was before the eyes of the writer, at the time he was giving currency to these statements, that your society in Leeds, which, I presume, does not exceed a thousand members, and without a stipendiary preacher, was expending after the rate of about £300. per annum. But to raise the average so high as £173. not one penny of the receipts is devoted to incidental expenses, and the total amount is augmented £6,000, by charging that sum twice over. How then is it possible to make the average £300., when it requires £6,000 more than the whole income of the whole connexion to raise it to £173? Your guides have no doubt, reckoned on your extreme gullability ; but here, surely, they have over-shot the mark !

I think I know, as well as these scribblers do, what is the real amount of my income ; and I think, too, that what I have to say upon the subject will have as much weight with the public as the unsupported assertions of anonymous libelers. I have travelled in the connexion thirty years last Conference ; and from the best calculation I can make, (and where I was in doubt respecting the exact sum, I have made it a point to put down more instead of less than the real amount,) my income, including all the items mentioned in the inves-

tigation of the York case, has not averaged £110. per annum. I never complained of my salary being insufficient, nor ever expressed a wish it should be increased, or entered into any stipulation as to its amount; but always felt contented and happy, as far as related to temporals, with what was given me. I am not ashamed, however, to ask you, or any one else, whether you think the salary of an exciseman too great for a minister of the gospel, while spending the best of his days in the service of the sanctuary? And I can scarcely restrain feelings which ought not perhaps to be indulged towards even the most depraved, when I hear men, who are perpetually canting about their purity, and their zeal for the glory of God, impeaching our motives, "prating against us with malicious words," and with a scornful air teaching fools to sing,—

"Money, money's all their cry;
Give them money, or they'll die."

If avarice were our ruling passion, might we not have gratified it more freely by following some other employment? When there are among our traducers some of the greatest blockheads who are saving thousands, it is not improbable, I presume, reckoning according to the ordinary course of things, that we might have found situations more lucrative, and subject to less annoyance, than the profession to which we are devoted.

It will probably be objected, that my case does not afford a fair average of what the preachers generally receive; because I travelled nine years as a single man, and have never had any children. To this I answer, 1. If some have married at an earlier stage of their itinerancy, consider what numbers have died before they had been thirty years in the work. If they were not single so many years as I was, neither were they married so many years as I have been. The disproportion, therefore, between me and others, in this particular, is not so great as some imagine. 2. Though I have had

no children, yet I have travelled in several of the best circuits in the connexion, such as Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Shields, York, Sheffield, Hull, etc., where my salary was larger than that of many of my brethren in the poor circuits, who had three or four children. I know that those who have large families, and are stationed in the best circuits, have considerably more than £110. a year; but I know also that all the single men and many of the married men, in the poor circuits, receive much less. There are the Arbroath, Banff, and Inverness circuits, which have five preachers, and only two hundred and twenty-three members. They were assisted from the contingent fund by a grant of £203., and from the school fund, for the education of a son and daughter, £20. How, with this help, could the few poor members make the average of their preachers' salaries come anything near to £100? All circumstances, therefore, taken into the account, I am disposed to consider mine as a pretty fair average of the preachers' income.

The representations contained in your Magazine, from month to month, of our pecuniary affairs, have had, I doubt not, a powerful influence in alienating many of your minds from us. But some of you have thought, that if it be such a great sin to support us, you ought to have a cheaper gospel in your new connexion. Your guides have laboured assiduously to impress it upon your minds, that with us religion is only an affair of pounds, shillings, and pence; and that our craving for money is insatiable. In your Magazine for August last, our friends in Leeds are insulted for having had, in order to replenish their exhausted funds, "recourse once more to the begging system, from door to door; and this is not confined to the members of the society, but embraces persons who are occasional hearers, and belonging to other denominations also." This is, no doubt, very wicked; but how are your travelling preachers supported? without money? No, no. Your people have also had recourse to the begging system; and have carried the matter a little fur-

ther than, with all our avarice, we have ventured to do. A short time ago bills were posted in the most conspicuous parts of this town, headed, "Home Missions," announcing preachers, and a public meeting, to finish with collections; and inviting the attendance of the inhabitants generally to help in this good work: the plain English of which is, when stripped of its verbosity, be so good as to give us something towards the support of our travelling preachers. It must be very disgraceful in our people to stoop so low as to ask the assistance of our occasional hearers; but very laudable in your people to beg of those who never hear them at all! But you wish perhaps to have a monopoly of the begging system, as you have already carried it much beyond what we ever dreamed of.

Besides the public meeting, your people have had recourse to the expedient, in order to maintain your travelling preachers, of begging "from door to door; and this is not confined to the members of the society," and "occasional hearers belonging to other denominations," but is extended to persons of other denominations who never come near them. Thus, two females, furnished with a bag for the siller, and with a book and pencil to note down the names of subscribers, set off a begging from door to door. In the course of their rambles, they called upon one of our friends, and requested a subscription for the missionaries. Our friend replied that she did subscribe for them, being under an impression that the applicants were collecting for foreign missions. The ladies retired, and our friend afterwards learned, that they were begging for Protestant travelling preachers. A lady, on whose veracity I can place the most implicit confidence, assured me that she was one day accosted by two of her own sex, who begged a subscription for the missions. Having a slight knowledge of the parties, she suspected all was not right, and after a little catechising, their cheeks became suffused with a blush, as the secret transpired that they were Protestant Methodists, begging for the support of their preachers, not in

foreign countries, for there they have none, but in our own.

This is doing the thing in a style to which I confess we are not accustomed. Look at the ingenuity of the plan. The missionary cause is popular; ladies' associations are often connected with these institutions; and female collectors have been remarkably successful in procuring pecuniary supplies. But we never heard before, I believe, of females canvassing for subscriptions for the missions, when the design was, not to send men to preach the gospel to the heathen abroad, but to employ them at home, to inspire their hearers with "astonishment and disgust at the conduct of the Conference preachers." But this mode of procedure is easily defended upon the new Protestant principles. Though the subscribers might be ignorant that the Protestant preachers are called missionaries, and might give their money under the notion that they were supporting foreign missionaries; yet surely the Protestants ought not to be blamed for this; they should have made further inquiries; and if they gave their money under a wrong impression, that will not hinder it from being useful in promoting the work of God. But when the whole truth comes out, the half-statements, though they may be correct as far as they go, look very suspicious!

Bad as we are, however, your people in Leeds seem to have no objection to appear before their townsmen in a simple Methodist garb. When the collectors for our Sunday schools went round to gather in the subscriptions, they were told in several instances that the subscriptions were already paid; and when the matter was investigated, it turned out that the Protestants had obtained these sums under pretence that they were begging for the Methodist Sunday schools. The word Protestant was left out in these applications, and the gentlemen believed at the time, that they were subscribing to our schools. But your managers are wise in their generation. They know the value of the word Protestant, in Leeds, and

are aware if prominence were given to this term, they need not go far beyond their own society to beg for their own institutions—they know that Methodist, not Protestant, Sunday schools will command the support of the public.

In the public notice given of the sermons to be preached for their Sunday schools, the bills were headed, "Methodist Sunday Schools;" and the word Protestant was omitted. And in their last report, the title is, "The Annual Report of the Methodist Sunday Schools, Leeds; established January, 1806." I have carefully examined this report, of thirty pages, and the word Protestant does not once occur in it. The title says, these schools were established in 1806, which is very true as regards our schools; but there were no Protestant Sunday schools till more than twenty years after that period. If they had really believed, what they have laboured so hard to make others believe, that the old connexion was nothing, and theirs all in all, in the esteem of their townsmen, they would have been afraid and ashamed at the thought that any one should commit the blunder of identifying them with us; and would have taken pains to prevent such a mistake. But they knew better. Such facts as these speak more than volumes of special pleading to the contrary, that they are conscious public opinion is in our favour, and opposed to them; and I can almost forgive the disingenuousness of their appeal to the inhabitants of Leeds, in our name, in the testimony it bears to their consciousness of our superiority of character. When they want assistance from the public purse, to support their preachers and schools, why then put the little deformed abortion of a Protestant to bed, and rock the crazy thing to sleep, and set off a begging for the missions, and for Methodist Sunday schools!

The fact seems to be, that several of you are getting your eyes open. You have come to the conclusion that, if the preachers pocket all the money raised in the whole connexion, you need not contribute much

now that you are free from them. Thus in the half-year ending September last, the ticket and class money had both fallen off; and though the stewards begun the year with £36. 10s. 10½d. in hand, they finished it with 1s. 8d. in debt; and through their extravagance they are becoming much more craving for money than their neighbours, and have recourse to expedients to raise the wind, which people who are not proof against the censures of the world, by their extraordinary sanctity, as yours are, would be ashamed of. Some have found it out, that ours is the cheapest concern, and have returned to us in consequence.

Your pastors and masters, I hear, are complaining of my writing, because, as they say, the controversy was dying and would soon have become extinct, but for my interference. Had I perceived any signs of this on their part, I would not have written a line; for though I think I possess some little ability to defend the truth, yet I greatly prefer peace to disputation; and have never taken up my pen in her cause but as a painful task, and under the impression of duty. Peace was what I greatly desired. In looking into your Magazine, however, I found a large proportion of its columns, every succeeding month, taken up in vilifying us; and instead of the angry spirit subsiding, a second periodical was started at the commencement of this year; and they seem to vie with each other as to which shall call us by the foulest names. And so late as April last, your Magazine contains an article under the title, "Can the Leeds case be forgotten?" In this conciliatory paper, our preachers are represented to be as bad as the worst of the Romish priests, as exercising a large share of chicane and cunning, as perpetrators of disgraceful and tyrannical acts, and as being wolves, etc. Our wish to live in peace, which was well known, was acknowledged, but at the same time ridiculed. Hear this son of peace: "I was very amused, a short time ago, by a friend informing me how very peaceable and conciliating the present Leeds preachers were, so much so, that they will not allow any conversation in

their presence on the Leeds case, and are determined to bury in oblivion all that is past.... They will be silent both in Leeds and other places, appear very conciliating, and use every means to raise themselves in the estimation of the people." This writer enumerates many particulars, for the thousandth time, which he affirms, "it would be an evil to forget." When our silence was construed into an admission of guilt, and emboldened the enemy to increase his forces and modes of attack, and to proclaim eternal war, I felt that I should sin against God and his church, if I did not take up the gauntlet. I am glad to find that just two or three blows bestowed on these recreant knights, have made them sick of fighting, and ashamed of their swaggering.

But it is objected further, that I write in a bad spirit. I will not affect a candour which I do not feel. Though there never was a body of ministers, I believe, vilified as we have been in the magazines and other publications of your party, yet I should have taken no public notice of their falsehoods, had not many precious souls been seduced from our societies, under a persuasion that charges so often repeated, and uncontradicted, must have something of truth in them. It is for your sakes, and not on account of myself and brethren, personally considered, that I have taken up my pen. Had you stood true to us, as you ought to have done, we might have had a struggle in our feelings whether we should regard our traducers with pity or contempt; but certainly we should have made no appeal to the press. The deep impression of my heart is, that your present condition is extremely perilous, and that it is my duty to recover you, if possible, out of the snare in which you are entangled. In attempting this, I confess I have been rather rough; but not more so, I believe, than the circumstances will justify. The apostle complained, "There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses." And in order to stop their mouths, Titus was exhorted

to "rebuke them sharply, that they might be sound in the faith." (Tit. i. 10—13.) St. Paul had no notion that using the knife freely and roughly, in relation to turbulent and factious men, was contrary to christianity.

When the points of difference regards doctrines merely, they may be discussed in the spirit of courtesy and good will. But when the question in dispute is that of character, it is impossible to debate it under the prevailing influence of the amiable feelings of our nature. We have been accused from the first as being an imperious and avaricious set of men, whose society every lover of liberty and goodness, of man and God, ought to shun. If these charges can be substantiated, we deserve all the reproach we have suffered; but if they cannot, then our accusers cannot be ranked among the saints, and have no right to complain, if the justification of our conduct involve in it the condemnation of theirs. There is no room for the exercise of candour in such a conflict. They cannot view our behaviour with candour, if they represent it correctly; and if they do not, what candour is due to public defamers?

I shall conclude this letter with an appeal to your consciences. Our plan of government was attacked as anti-scriptural, and yours was lauded as being according to the New Testament. Now I fearlessly refer to the numerous passages produced in my former letters, as quite decisive of the controversy. As to your plan, besides its having no support from the sacred oracles, I am not aware, amidst the almost infinite diversity of forms of ecclesiastical polity which different sects in different ages have adopted, that any prior to the Ranters have set you an example of divesting a minister, wholly devoted to his work, of all authority in the church; and of lodging both the legislative and executive power in the hands of men who six days out of seven are devoted to worldly pursuits. If your leading men be in error in this matter, you cannot be innocent in supporting them in their usurped authority.

As to the causes of separation, though much stress has been laid upon the organ, yet when you consider that an organ had been used at Burley, and other musical instruments at Leeds, for many years, without producing any complaint or protest; and that your people clung to the organ at Burley, at the time they were so vehemently opposed to the one at Brunswick; it seems impossible to refer the noise they made upon this subject to the voice of conscience. And with regard to the liturgy, how is it possible they should have any conscientious fears of its introduction into Brunswick, when its use in their chapels in the metropolis had the sanction of their first yearly meeting? I have shown that all the other pretences urged to justify your secession, are as hollow as these; and I have proved, I hope to your satisfaction, that the only real causes of their dividing from us, were a culpable alienation of affection, an impatience of legal restraint, and a haughty determination to usurp powers which belonged to others. And is all this to have your continued sanction and support?

And what do you think of their charging those as vile slanderers who expressed a suspicion that they intended to make a division? You were not at that time, it seems, prepared to go with them; but needed a little more schooling. What think you of all their boisterous appeals to the British constitution, when, after they had drawn you away from us, they denied you a single extra privilege? Can they otherwise than despise you for becoming their silly tools? and can you any longer remain their dupes?

I also ask you, as in the presence of God, now that you have read my reply to their misrepresentations respecting our salaries, what are your impressions? Many of you know that their bold and confident assertions upon this subject, contributed more than all other things put together to persuade you to desert us. I have shown, from their own admissions, that their conclusions cannot be correct. And will you still continue to hate and execrate us? Do you not feel that you

ought to turn the current of your affections to those who have done nothing to forfeit your confidence and esteem ?

I must beg leave to make a little inquiry as to your religious experience. Many of you were converted and brought to a saving knowledge of the truth under our ministry, and in the use of those means of grace which are under our superintendence. While you remained with us, up to the time that your minds were poisoned by the deceit and falsehood of others, you found the ordinances amongst us to be spirit and life to your souls. In those days you loved God and your ministers ; you were thankful and happy. " Where is then the blessedness ye spake of ? for we bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to us. Are we therefore become your enemies, because we tell you the truth ? They zealously affect you, but not well." (Gal. iv. 15—17.) I have proved both from scripture and reason, that God will not extensively own the labours of wicked ministers ; and I defy any man to disprove what I have said upon that point : you must, therefore, either deny your own piety, or our wickedness. Is not the securing of our salvation the main thing we have to mind in religion ? Now, according to your own account, you obtained saving grace in our connexion. What did you want more ? Why should you meddle with them that are given to change ? And what state of mind must you have been in, when you could turn your backs on the ministers and people with whom you had found redemption, to engage in a new untried scheme ; as though you had everything in religion to find out. I wish to impress it upon your minds that you owe much to those who have been instruments in turning you to God, and that it must be a very strong case indeed which can absolve you from your obligations to them, and justify your separation from them. I am quite sure that you can make out no such case ;

it is, therefore, your duty to repent, and to return to us.

But do not misunderstand me. When you left us, some other denominations began to caress you, and invited you to participate in their fellowship; and now I am requesting you to come back to us; and I fear you may suspect that you are very important personages. You were told how wisely and righteously you had acted in leaving us; and what sagacity and independence of mind you would manifest in joining your flatterers. I now ask you to return to us. But why? Not because I esteem you either the wisest or the best of men; but because I think you acted foolishly and wickedly in leaving us. I shall neither court nor flatter you. I have given you the reasons why I believe it to be your duty to measure your steps back again to the old connexion; and if you can come in the spirit of humility, our door is open to you, and we will welcome you in the name of the Lord. I am happy to say that several during the past quarter have rejoined us, and have met with a cordial reception. Upon the same terms I would invite your officers. But in reference to these, a word of explanation may be proper. It is so common a saying as to be almost proverbial in the town, that they all want to be masters. I do not think these contentious spirits worth receiving; we have had more than enough of them. These men need to be converted; and till they feel this, they are unfit for any religious society. We believe, however, that some leaders and local preachers were more deceived than deceivers; and if any of these can stoop low enough to confess they have erred, we will, without any doubtful disputations, hold out to them the right hand of fellowship. I remain,—

Yours, affectionately and faithfully,

D. ISAAC.

LEEDS, *July 8, 1830.*

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POSTSCRIPT.

MR. GLOVER has honoured my first letter with a reply, and he might possibly feel slighted, if I were to pass by him in silence. It is laudable in a young man like Mr. Glover to devote a portion of his leisure to the study of the Bible; but what a conflict he must have had with his modesty when he determined to turn author, and enlighten the world with his theological disquisitions. Speaking of my letter, he says, "It is evident this pamphlet is written from alarm, lest the power and income of the itinerant preachers, should be too much exposed, by a comparison with our constitution." Mr. G., I am told, belongs to the law; and I think it does not become him to prate against the salaries of Methodist preachers. Such a pious man as he evidently is, will not, I presume, deny that the care of men's souls deserves as liberal a remuneration, as the care of their estates; he ought, therefore, to stop till he has brought the income of lawyers down to the level of ours, before he complain that ours is too high. Can it be that he is casting an envious glance at my salary, because his own is not equal to it? If this be the case, I cannot forbear saying, when I look at the princely style in which many of his brethren live, that he must be either one of the most unfortunate men that ever lived, or else one of the greatest simpletons that his profession ever produced.

The agreement I exhibited between itinerant ministers and the evangelists of sacred scripture, has excited mighty alarm among the Protestants. They perceive that the permanency of the evangelical office must be destroyed, or their system is at an end. And yet prior to the publication of my letter, they were not harrassed with any scruples upon the subject. An article appeared in their Magazine for August and September last, entitled, "The employment of, and provision for, itinerant ministers, evangelists, or missionaries." This article, was published also in the

form of a pamphlet ; and it is generally believed that the reasonings it contained determined the yearly meeting to employ this class of officers. Here the sameness of itinerant ministers, or evangelists, is taken for granted !

Mr. G. labours hard to prove that a scripture evangelist was an "extraordinary officer;" that his office consisted, as far as we can judge, of nothing but preaching; and that the office was only temporary in its duration. Thus at page 9, he sums up what he conceives he had previously demonstrated. "I have endeavoured to show," says he, "that if the duty of an evangelist is merely to preach the gospel, then every preacher is an evangelist—that if it does not consist of preaching, we have no ground to judge of the nature of the office—that we have no proof of its being a permanent office." The first of these positions is intended to put every preacher upon a level with an evangelist; the second denies that any duty belongs to the office of an evangelist besides preaching; and the third denies the permanency of the office. Let us suppose all these proved, and then what is the amount of his demonstrations? Why, that, since the evangelists were merely preachers, and their office of preaching only temporary, there ought not to have been any preaching since the primitive times! In the name of common sense, then, why do the Protestants employ preachers and missionaries? A man must possess more cunning than a lawyer to reconcile such things as these!

But Mr. G. is not disheartened at the greatest difficulties; nor does he shrink from adopting the greatest absurdities. Having proved to his own satisfaction, perhaps, that Timothy was an "extraordinary officer," he desires his readers to keep this in mind while 2 Tim. iv. 1—5 is under examination. He remarks upon it, page 7, "Now what is the obvious meaning of this passage? Most undoubtedly, that, amid the trials and opposition from those 'having the form of godliness but denying its power,' and who 'turning away their ears from the truth unto fables,' would not 'en-

duce sound doctrine,' Timothy should be watchful, endure the affliction in patience, but oppose it by doing the work of an evangelist, that is, by preaching the grand truths of the gospel, faithfully and steadily, as the only effectual means of checking the progress of error." And pray what is there which is extraordinary in this? Ought not every minister to be watchful, patient, and preach the gospel faithfully and steadily? Mr. G. speaks out plainly here again as to the duties of the evangelical office. Timothy was to oppose false doctrine "by doing the work of an evangelist, that is, by preaching the gospel, as the only effectual means of checking the progress of error." Preaching is undoubtedly included in the work of an evangelist; but when it is asserted that this is the only means he possesses of opposing error and vice, the position is not tenable. I have shown that Timothy and Titus had the ordering and governing of the churches where they resided; and a little common sense is sufficient to satisfy any man that the exercise of discipline is as necessary to the purity of the church as a faithful ministry.

Mr. G. seems to be aware that his cause is lost, if Timothy and Titus are allowed to have been evangelists. I had remarked, "Titus was an officer similar to Timothy." Mr. G. says, "We admit this." All I have to do, therefore, is, to show that Timothy was an evangelist; and my proof is contained in the words where he is exhorted to do the work of this office. In opposition to this, Mr. G. says, page 8, "We know nothing of Timothy in the character of an evangelist." He also lays great stress upon it, and repeats it twice within a few lines, page 7, that "Timothy is never once called an evangelist." Mr. G. assures us that he did the work of an evangelist "by preaching the gospel." We have seen above, that preaching is the only work he assigns to the evangelical office and to Timothy; if he, therefore, did the whole work of the office, and if that was his proper work, which is not denied, he must necessarily have been an officer, that

is, an evangelist. I must also remind Mr. G. that though Timothy is exhorted in this passage to preach the word, and in another text is said to have preached it, yet he is never in the New Testament called a preacher. If he will have the goodness to explain to me how Timothy could do the work of a preacher without being a preacher, I will concede that he might do the work of an evangelist without being an evangelist. But till this be done, I shall take it for granted that the title of evangelist belonged to Timothy and Titus, as well as to Philip; and though I have rested my cause upon these three, I think the New Testament affords abundant evidence that evangelists were rather numerous.

As the work of these evangelists is recorded in the New Testament, we can be at no loss to know what belongs to their office. It is plain enough that they,

1. Preached the gospel.
2. Were itinerant preachers.
3. Baptised their converts, and formed them into churches.
4. Governed the churches, as Timothy and Titus did those of Ephesus and Crete.
5. Were wholly devoted to their work.
6. Appointed others to the same office.

All this I have proved at large in my first letter. Now I ask in the name of reason and religion, what is there in all this work which will not want doing while there shall be an unconverted sinner, and a church upon earth?

A writer in the Protestant Magazine for last month is not quite so chivalrous as Mr. Glover: he does not attempt to show that the office of a scripture evangelist included nothing but preaching, and then insist that the office was merely temporary. His capacity, though shallow enough, could comprehend, that, if these points were demonstrated, the ministry would be destroyed. He therefore distinguishes between the literal and the scriptural meaning of the word evangelist. He does not, like Mr. G., accuse me of ascribing too much to the evangelists of holy writ; he merely contends that their office was extraordinary and temporary, and that if the word be applied to any now, it

must be in its literal sense, as denoting merely one who announces good news; in which sense "every local preacher is as truly an evangelist as Mr. Isaac himself." He says, "Mr. Isaac, we apprehend, is not aware that Mr. Tucker used the term in question, in a very different sense to the one intended by him. Mr. T. well knew, that evangelist literally denotes one who announces good news, and in this sense it was that he used it; and never conceived that any one would suppose that he intended to convey the idea, that modern evangelists, (if preachers may be so termed,) had a right to the same prerogatives, as the evangelists of the New Testament."

This is all news to me. But this writer has not said that he has Mr. Tucker's authority for this exposition of his sentiments; and it happens that he has explained himself upon this point with sufficient precision. He propounds an objection to his proposal of having stipendiary evangelists, in these words, "That evangelists, if popular men, might possibly make parties in various parts of the circuits, in which they would labour; and thereby either disturb the tranquillity, and interrupt the harmony of the connexion, or cause partial separations from the body." To this he replies, "But is it either a rational, or an orthodox proceeding thus to anticipate visionary objections against scriptural practices and scriptural precepts, merely because their occurrence may be supposed to be within the bounds of possibility? Upon this basis, it would be easy to erect an argument in proof that the divine appointment of bishops in the churches of christianity, was an unwise enactment; for the bishop of Rome, availing himself of that character, ultimately assumed an independent and supreme dominion in the church, as his legitimate right." From which it is certain, if there be any meaning in words, that Mr. Tucker understood the employment and support of evangelists in the present day, to have the sanction of "scriptural practices, and scriptural precepts." But he would be a clever fellow who could produce scripture precepts

and precedents for the employment of evangelists who could not be recognised "as the evangelists of the New Testament;" for this would imply that scripture authorises the appointment of unscriptural officers; an absurdity which I cannot charge upon the Bible; nor upon Mr. Tucker, till he formally avow it. His illustration drawn from "the divine appointment of bishops," to show that though the office be liable to abuse, yet it ought to be continued, could have no application to his subject, only on the supposition that the evangelists which he recommended were those of "divine appointment."

The state of the case then is this. Mr. Tucker on the ground of "scriptural practices and scriptural precepts" recommended the Protestants to employ evangelists. They adopted his suggestions; and inform us in their rules, page 4, that their system is drawn up "in accordance with the usages of the New Testament;" and they had scripture precepts and precedents by wholesale to justify their employment of "itinerant ministers, evangelists, or missionaries," and every other regulation they had made. The whole concern was so accordant with the New Testament, that it would have done a poor distressed soul nearly as much good to study their immaculate rules, as to study the Bible. But now, since the appearance of my letter, they have made the wonderful discovery that the evangelists which they received on Mr. Tucker's recommendation, were intended by him, and admitted by them, as unscriptural evangelists; and they actually boast in their last Magazine, in these words, "We can unequivocally declare that we have no Bible evangelists among us." I shall not feel much surprised if their next unequivocal declaration be, "We have no Bible amongst us!"

But what profound critics are Mr. Glover and the Magazine writer. They have found it out that the word "evangelist, literally denotes, one who announces good news." And they seem almost half willing to admit the use of the term, in this sense, if we will but

extend it to local preachers. But we demur ; because, 1. In the Magazine it is admitted that such would not be "evangelists of the New Testament." 2. We fear the consequences. An errand boy will by and by, perhaps, insist upon being called an apostle, because this word literally donotes a messenger, one who is sent. 3. We object to local preachers being called evangelists, because though all evangelists are preachers, yet all preachers are not evangelists. I have given an example in my second letter of an evangelist presiding over local preachers. I am astonished that men of such amazing erudition should need to be informed, that all the duties of an office cannot be expressed by a single term.

When I had demonstrated that our travelling preachers, and not theirs, answer to the evangelists of the Bible, they immediately made the discovery that the evangelical office was not to be perpetuated in the church, because of the extraordinary gifts of the primitive officers ; and I am hectored in the following strain : " We must tell Mr. Isaac, that his claims are not valid, and we call for his testimonials. Has he been endowed with the extraordinary influences of the Holy Ghost ? Can he cast out unclean spirits, heal palsies, cure the lame, etc. And, if not, then we must maintain that he has no right to the powers of an evangelist of the New Testament." Take breath, Mr. Critic, while, in my turn, I catechise you a little. Will you be so obliging as to inform me where it is written, that either Timothy or Titus performed these wonderful works ? I find nothing of that sort in the New Testament attributed to them. And though Philip's preaching at Samaria, (see Acts viii.,) was accompanied with miracles, I think I may be excused producing these testimonials, when Timothy and Titus could perform this part of their office without them. However, I promise to produce them when your own preachers set me an example. Another of the powers I claim as an evangelist, is that of baptizing. May I venture to administer this rite without working a miracle ? A

Protestant elder claims this power ; and I cannot for the life of me comprehend how he, more than myself, may be excused the production of a miracle. So, if we go through all the powers I have ascribed to evangelists, you will find the same powers claimed by the Protestants. Let us instance, in the appointment of elders. The evangelists of scripture exercised this prerogative, and I claim it for our evangelists. But says the learned critic, the evangelists of scripture authenticated their claim by miracles ; but where are yours ? I answer, that Timothy and Titus are my authorities ; and they wrought no miracles to prove their right to appoint elders. But, Mr. Critic, who appoint your elders ? “ They shall be elected by the quarterly meeting, who shall also appoint one of them to be the presiding elder.”* And pray what miracles are performed by the quarterly meeting ? I should think they ought to raise the dead, in proof that they can produce such a thing as a presiding elder, an anomalous being about which the Bible is entirely silent.

With regard to immunities, I showed in my first letter that the Protestant elders exceed the Conference preachers ; and instanced in their having no law by which a delinquent elder can be tried, though special directions are given in all other cases. On this they observe in the Magazine for the present month, that the “ elders, of course, are amenable to, and can be deposed by, the same meeting which appointed them.” But if this follow of course, there was no necessity to legislate on the trial of any one. They happened, however, in their wisdom, to forget none but themselves ! But how does this follow as a matter of course ? Do those who inaugurate our king, possess a power of dethroning him ? If they were to attempt it, they would, of course, be soon taught a different lesson. If our preachers, therefore, in order to support their claims, ought to “ heal palsies,” your immaculate elders should be able to “ remove mountains.”

* Rules, p. 13.

If it be true, what these writers and some others, have said, that the evangelical office was to cease, when the officers could no longer work miracles, the argument will carry them much further than they seem to be aware of. The primitive elders possessed miraculous powers. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." Can anything be plainer than that the eldership was an extraordinary office, to continue during the age of miracles, and to cease with it? Can your elders, any more than our evangelists, work such miracles? But there is this difference in the two cases, which is all against you, that the miracle was a part of the duty connected with the elders' office, which is not the case with the evangelists. But we must go much further yet. Private christians, in the primitive times, had miraculous gifts. Cornelius and his family and friends, had the gift of tongues prior to their baptism; and the Ephesians spake with tongues and prophesied immediately after baptism. (Acts x. 46; xix. 5, 6.) More evidence to the same effect might be produced. Now if it be a good argument, that, because the first evangelists had extraordinary powers, therefore their office was to cease with the extinction of those powers; then it will equally hold, that, because the first private christians possessed the same powers, the profession of christianity was to end with them!

As the Protestants can produce nothing out of scripture against the permanency of the office, they have made an attempt in their Magazine for the last month to overwhelm us with human authorities. On these I remark, that neither Hammond, nor Doddridge, nor Macknight, say one word on the office being either extraordinary or temporary. One of the quotations from Mr. Wesley does not mention evangelists at all; and the other speaks of them merely as extraordinary officers. But this is no proof that he believed the office to be tem-

porary ; for he was persuaded, as he often affirmed in his writings, that both himself and his preachers, had an extraordinary call from God to the work in which they were engaged. Mr. Benson merely quotes Mr. Wesley's words, which was a matter of course, as he incorporated into his own Commentary the whole of Mr. Wesley's notes ; and there is no indication that he understood the words in a different sense. The other authors cited, with only one exception, were ministers of particular churches, who seem to have been satisfied with their own local inclosure, and left the world to perish. It was not till lately that the protestant world became alive to the injunction, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." It has at length come home to the consciences of many, with all the weight of divine obligation, that they must exert their best ability to fulfil this precept. This has issued in the employment of an order of men like our itinerants and the evangelists of holy writ ; and without such labourers as these, it seems very improbable that the world should ever be evangelised.

Evangelists, it is admitted, were useful, and even necessary, in the first plantation of churches ; but after christianity had become pretty well established, it is supposed the great Head of the church intended their office should become extinct. If this representation were correct, they ought still to be employed, because there are hundreds of thousands of places where, instead of churches well established, there are no churches at all. There is, therefore, the same reason for perpetuating the office, as there was for its original institution. I have shown in my first letter, in the case of an African missionary, that he must exercise the powers of a primitive evangelist. And that the apostle intended the order to be perpetuated in the church, seems evident from 2 Timothy ii. 2, where Timothy is enjoined to commit to faithful men the same ministry he had himself received. If the office be retained, I am not anxious about the name by which it is designated. Call the officers itinerant ministers, evangelists, or mission-

aries, etc. But it must create great confusion to call these presiding officers, elders; because that is the name of another, and an inferior class of officers, according to the New Testament. The Protestant elders are not itinerants; for they have confessed in this month's Magazine, "that the office was local, every church having its elders." In scripture, I have shown, the itinerants governed the elders, who were local; among the Protestants, the elders tyrannise over the itinerants; and because we would not submit to their tyranny, they set off full gallop on a heavenly mission, and full of zeal for the glory of God, to inspire the nation "with astonishment and disgust at the conduct of Methodist preachers."

If it be said that when a church is organised, the authority of the evangelist should cease; I ask, were not primitive churches just as capable as modern ones are, to manage, as soon as formed, their own affairs? Ephesus was much further advanced in arts, sciences, and civilization, in the days of the apostles, than most heathen countries are at this day; and yet though this church was founded and settled by St. Paul, we find Timothy in it, ten years after its formation, exercising authority over both elders and members. I adduced in my first letter what I esteem conclusive proof, that an evangelist presided in this church about forty years after it was planted; Mr. Glover, in controverting my argument, is reduced to the absurdity of supposing the word angel, to be a noun of multitude: "There can be no doubt," he says, "that the word angel, is meant for the whole church." And the proof of it is, that at the end, and sometimes in other parts, of an epistle, the church is addressed, as though this could not be done through the medium of its minister; and as though this were any proof that he could not be addressed personally! Will Mr. G. have the goodness to give an example, in corroboration of his singular opinion, from any other part of scripture, or from any writer whatever, that the angel, is a noun of multitude?

A scribbler, under the signature of "A Churchman," has made himself very busy in this controversy, and would fain pass himself off for a person of some consequence, as to parts and learning, and vapours as though the destiny of Wesleyan Methodism were in his hands. But he betrays himself. The flagellation which the Noncons have received, would not have goaded him to madness, had he not been of their party. A man makes himself appear ridiculous when he puts on a mask, if he cannot hide himself under it. An ass should not disguise itself in a lion's skin, if it have not discretion enough to refrain from braying. He talks about learning, in the style of an ignoramus; and he raves with all the incoherence of a maniac, without enlivening his furious invectives by a particle of wit. Report, it is true, has fathered this pigmy suckling, which has nearly roared itself to death of the gripes, upon a member of the establishment, as well as upon the Protestants; but I really feel no curiosity to ascertain who may be its parent. I doubt not but the writer is pedant enough to presume, that in a few years there will be as many volumes written to find out who is entitled to the merit of his productions, as have already issued from the press to determine who was the mysterious author of Junius; but he should recollect, that, though we may be anxious to draw aside the veil which conceals a giant, few people would think it worth the trouble to strip a little quadruped, disguised in a cap and jacket, in order to discover whether it were a lap dog or a monkey.

Though I am not very nice in such matters, I really cannot stoop so low as to enter into controversy with a man who cannot argue, who dare not show his face, and who has only the darkness of secrecy to screen his head from dishonour; yet I will take occasion here to explain a point. Many of the Protestants are circulating, very industriously, that my principles are changed; and that in these letters I advocate sentiments contrary to those contained in "Ecclesiastical Claims." The principle which inspired the two works

is precisely the same ; they are both in defence of Methodism. The former was written when our religious privileges were threatened by churchmen ; the latter, when eternal war was declared against us by the Protestants. I never gave a pledge to any man, or body of men, that I would not alter my opinions upon any religious question. A man must either give up reading and study, or be at liberty to change his sentiments. I am not aware, however, that my views on church government have undergone any alteration since I wrote "Ecclesiastical Claims." I published that work with great reluctance ; and this has been the case with regard to all my controversial performances ; and the only reason why it has not been reprinted, is, that the church of England has since manifested a more peaceable disposition. Had avarice been my ruling passion, as the Protestants insinuate, I could have made nearly a fortune by that book ; for the first edition, of 1,250 copies, was soon sold off, and I have been very strongly importuned by booksellers and others to reprint it. But though I approve generally of the sentiments and arguments it contains, I should make many serious alterations in it, were the spirit of persecution to revive, and render a second edition necessary.

In publishing this book, I had the misfortune to incur the censure of my brethren, who thought proper to express their disapprobation in a minute of Conference. Upon this minute I printed some remarks, and sent them by post to the superintendents only ; it was never sold, nor intended to meet the public eye. In this letter I made some free remarks upon the conduct of some of the preachers, who were principally concerned in procuring the censure. The Protestants have obtained this letter by means which I will not stop to explain at present. They seem to exult in it that I was once at variance with some of the preachers, against whom their bitterest hostility has been directed ; and to think that it is very inconsistent on my part, after the lapse of so many years, to defend their

conduct against the unceasing attacks of these agitators. Had it been any part of my religion, never to forgive an injury, or to suppress an angry feeling, there would undoubtedly appear to be some inconsistency in my present conduct; but if they can never forget the Leeds case, and are determined to cherish their resentments for ever, I thank God I have no fellow-feeling with them. And I will tell the Protestants, that this case of mine, which they are dragging before the public to expose my wickedness in being reconciled to those with whom I once had a difference, will furnish the most triumphant evidence in refutation of the charges which they are perpetually urging against the principal preachers, and against Mr. Bunting in particular. It is said that the Conference is enslaved by them; that if a preacher dare to oppose them, he is punished by being sent to a poor circuit, etc. Now what was the fact, in my case? Nearly all the principal men were opposed to me, and certainly I did not spare them; but instead of their transporting me to the worst circuits for fourteen years, I have, during that period, had a run of several of the best circuits in the connexion. This fact proves either that they do not possess the power ascribed to them, or, if they do, that they do not pervert it: if the former be the fact, the Protestants are calumniators; and if the latter, the preachers deserve that power which they do not abuse.

“The leaders meeting of the Leeds Wesleyan Protestant Methodist Society,” by their stewards, John Kirkbride and William Myers, have advertised me in the Leeds Mercury as having in my second letter asserted things which “are completely false—audacious calumnies—vile insinuations—unjust—Jesuitical,” etc. If these charges be true, I must be a very bad man: and if false, what must be the character of the accusers?

Some have wondered that I did not answer these charges in the paper where they first appeared. To have done so, I must have been at an enormous expense in advertising; and great as a Methodist

preacher's salary is, according to Protestant statements, I found that my finances would not allow me to contend with a whole leaders' meeting, in this kind of warfare. But waiving this, I am not at all satisfied that the editor of a newspaper has a right to publish a libel on a person, and then charge him an exorbitant sum for the privilege of defending himself. To concede this, would amount to a premium on defamation; and he who could be mean enough to give it, would never want an accuser! As I felt no disposition to pay Mr. Baines several pounds for publishing through the county that I am an unprincipled villain, I have let the poison work. I was under no alarm that my character would suffer in the esteem of any whose esteem I value, by remaining a few weeks under the accusations of a trio of Protestants, in Mr. Baines's most religious and patriotic paper. I will just, however, inform Mr. B., that he need not publish any more addresses to me personally, as I have no intention of ever looking into his paper again. If he think it his duty to the public, to denounce me as a bad man, let him by all means relieve his conscience; but he must not calculate upon my paying him money to repel calumnies as often as he may please to lend his columns for their reception. His feelings in relation to Methodist preachers are pretty well known.

I stated in my second letter, page 5, "Many of the heads of your party were suspected of heterodoxy respecting the trinity. It was naturally expected that this most momentous subject would be noticed in some way in your list of doctrines; but though it extends to fourteen particulars, the trinity is left out." In reference to the first part of this charge, the advertisers say, "We boldly assert that we have not heard a single imputation of that nature whispered against any of the parties referred to." Indeed! I have very frequently not only heard the imputation whispered but proclaimed aloud. Now for the proof. One to whom I refer, as among the heads of your party is, Mr. Tucker. That he was esteemed one of your principal men is

evident from the offices which he held. He was the editor of your Magazine, and was, therefore, the caterer for your spiritual wants. He was a preacher among you, and had his name upon your plan, up to the time of his leaving Leeds. He was one of your principal preachers; being employed in occasional services, such as the opening of chapels, when your most gifted men are sought after; and having three large letters, V.D.M. appended to his name, which must be nearly equal in importance to R.E.V. This gentleman published a book, which was advertised on the cover of the Protestant Magazine for February, 1829, under the following title: "The triumph of scriptural and rational truth displayed, in a complete refutation of the absurd and unauthorised doctrines of the eternal generation of the divine Logos, and the hypostatical union of two spiritual natures in Jesus Christ; with a critical analysis of the popular doctrine of the trinity in unity, as the mode of existence of the supreme God, its gross absurdities pointed out, and its total inconsistency with the testimony of scriptures clearly proved. The essential divinity of both the Logos, and the Holy Spirit, as the offspring of the Father, demonstrated; and the generical identity of the former, with the race of Adam, as the fountain of human nature, amply shown." This title, which was advertised, is an enlargement of the one prefixed to the book. This work, as the production of the editor of your Magazine, and an accredited preacher upon your plan, would, we may calculate with some certainty, be read rather extensively in your connexion. In this title the author declares he has pointed out the "gross absurdities of the popular doctrine of the trinity in unity, as the mode of existence of the supreme God." Every one knows, who knows anything on the subject, that what Mr. T. calls the popular, is the orthodox doctrine. All orthodox christians hold the "hypostatical union of two spiritual natures in Jesus Christ." This Mr. T. says, is absurd and unauthorised, and affirms he has given of it a complete refutation. And he professes to

have demonstrated the generical identity of the Logos, (who, he admits, possesses essential divinity,) with the race of Adam.

A few extracts from the book will illustrate still further his orthodoxy: "Hence we conclude that those terms, trinity and unity, being self-contradictory, and totally destructive of each other, one of them must be abandoned for the establishment of the other. If, therefore, the unity be the true mode of the divine subsistence, the trinity of equality must be given up. But if the trinity be the true mode, then the unity cannot be maintained.* . . . I beg leave to denounce the whole Athanasian system of the incarnation of the deity, as a tissue of falsehood; a compilation of absurdity and blasphemy, the disgrace of christianity, and the shame of its professors. Its votaries should blush while they avow themselves to be its disciples.† . . . I conclude that the only-begotten Son of God must be an essentially divine Being; but that as a generated being, he cannot be eternal nor self-existent, nor intrinsically omnipotent.‡ . . . The Son is a distinct hypostasis from the Father; and though essentially divine, is nevertheless inferior both in rank and power to the Father. § . . . We must conclude, that the Son, is inferior, even in the attributes of his divine essence, to the Father; with whom, as a begotten Son, he can be neither co-equal nor co-eternal."|| On "the hypostatical union of two spiritual natures in one personal Christ," he says, "I have already said something relative to the natural impossibility and irrational absurdity of this dogma. Let us now examine for a moment its moral character also. I esteem it as the fundamental error of modern christian theology, existing among a great majority of those who, because they hold this error, as an adjunct to the doctrine of the trinity in unity, are exclusively complimented with the title of the orthodox. It is, sir, the prolific parent of almost every heresy that has ever in-

* The Triumph, etc., p. 16. † Ib., p. 25. ‡ Pp. 44, 45.
§ P. 48, note. || P. 50.

fested the christian churches since its unhappy introduction thereto."* On the same doctrine of the divine and human natures in Christ, he says, on the next page, "I charge this dogma with the crime of producing flat and unequivocal idolatry in the orthodox churches of christianity. And in the name of that God who is thus insulted by it, I call upon the advocates, votaries, and worshippers of that idol, to come forward, and defend their compounded deity from those charges, if they can, or else for ever to abandon both their belief in its existence, and their confidence in its godhead. I impeach the doctrine of the trinity in unity, as the supposed mode of the existence of the supreme God, because I nowhere find it revealed in scripture, and because, if admitted, it would not only undeify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, considered in himself alone, and render him dependent for his Godhead, upon his association with the Son and Spirit, as co-partners in essential Deity; but would also impose upon him, who is in himself a system of infinite perfection, the imperfection of being only a constituent portion of a perfect being.†.... Neither the trinity in unity, the eternal generation of the Son of God, nor the hypostatical union of two natures, constituting one person in Jesus Christ, are subjects of divine revelation.‡.... The grand and fundamental principle of all sound theology is the unity of the Godhead. This must subsist in one simple uncompounded Being, who is of the purest essence, and comprising in himself alone, all the attributes of infinite perfection. Consequently he cannot be composed of three persons; for it is essential to a person, that he should possess all the identifying faculties of a self-conscious, and self-determining being, distinct from all other beings. Without these qualities, if a person could exist at all, he could not be either a rational or an intelligent being; but must be very imperfect, and, in fact, an idiot!"|| This I think

* The Triumph, etc., p. 51.

† Ib., p. 123.

‡ Ib., p. 158.

|| Ib., p. 144.

is speaking out! If there be three persons in one God, he must be an idiot!

As Mr. Tucker speaks about the divine nature of Christ, it may perhaps be worth while to learn from this profound theologian what sort of a divinity the Saviour really is. In scripture he is sometimes styled God, and sometimes man, which the orthodox believe, refer to his two-fold nature; but Mr. T. contends he possesses but one nature, which is both divine and human. "The divinity of the Son," he says, "is moulded into a human form." The spirit which animated the body of Christ was "the divine Logos;" and he prepared himself for this union by "contracting his mental powers to the capacity of a man: yea, of an infant, the embryo of a man. . . . The divine Logos entered the womb of a virgin, as the animating spirit of a miraculously conceived human infant; to whose body, being thus united, he became therein a perfect man child, and was born, suffered, and died, as a man." Mr. T. philosophises upon this subject in the following manner: "Nor would the natural and physical economy of human nature admit of any other arrangement than this; for the organisation of an infant's brain, could not, in the regular course of nature, sustain the operation of an adult intellectual power upon its tender fibres. And to have forced this out of the regular order of nature, would have been a monstrous anomaly therein, of which we cannot accuse its divine Author. Hence I conclude, that the incarnated Logos, 'that he might in all things be made like unto his brethren,' in the assumption of a human body, took that body upon him, subject to all the mental infirmities incident to an association therewith, during its conception in an embryo state, as well as during the progressive expansion of its intellectual organisation, exactly as these events occur in other men."*

You may now form a tolerably correct notion of Mr. Tucker's sentiments on the divinity of Christ, and on

* The Triumph, etc., pp. 38—40.

the trinity. According to him, our blessed Saviour is a mere creature, and not eternal in his existence. He is not almighty. He is as changeable as any other creature; and at the time of his incarnation his mental powers were compressed to suit the embryo state. And as in that state human beings have no ideas at all; and as our Lord's case is said to be an exact resemblance of what "occurs in other men;" it follows, that during this period, "the divine Logos" had not a single idea! A divinity deprived of all knowledge and reason, and possessed of no power to acquire either, beyond what is common to human beings! Who can forbear laughing at such folly, and trembling at such blasphemy! Such is Mr. T.'s account of Him who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever!" As to a trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead, the whole vocabulary of his abusive terms is exhausted against this doctrine; and it is impiously asserted, that if such were the mode of the divine existence, God must be an idiot!

I have shown that Mr. Tucker was one of the heads of your party. As it regards him, I might have used much stronger language than that of suspicion. The extracts I have given make his heterodoxy awfully manifest, and I could have added many more pages full of citations to the same effect. An important fact has come to my knowledge; that of a local preacher among the Protestants having embraced Mr. Tucker's opinions: this he avowed in the house of one of our friends; and with the zeal of a new convert recommended Mr. T.'s book with its ribaldry. Yet the leaders' meeting have the hardihood to affirm, that the suspicions I mentioned "are completely false;" and they go on to say, "We boldly assert, that we never heard a single imputation of that nature whispered against any of the parties referred to." The title page of Mr. T.'s book bears the date of 1828; the book was advertised on the cover of their Magazine for February, 1829; it was sold by Mr. Barr, the printer of their Magazine, and the seller of all their trash; and yet, up

to June 17th, 1830, not a member of the leaders' meeting ever heard so much as a whisper of suspicion against the orthodoxy of any of the heads of their party! He that can believe it, let him believe it.

But to the other branch of my accusation, that in the "list of doctrines, the trinity is left out," I am referred to the three first of your doctrines, which are, "1. The existence of the one, true, and eternal God. 2. The true and proper Godhead of Jesus Christ. 3. The personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit." The word trinity, does not occur in these articles; nor do they express anything approaching to an orthodox meaning of the term, which denotes, "The union of three divine persons in the Godhead." No man professing Mr. Tucker's sentiments could feel any hesitation in subscribing to these articles. On the first there is no dispute. On the second, Mr. T. would tell you, that his exposition of the doctrine contains the true, and, consequently, the proper Godhead of Jesus Christ. On the third, he could feel no more difficulty than on the first and second; for though he asserts that the Holy Spirit, as well as the Son, was created, yet he does not scruple to talk about "the essential divinity of the Holy Spirit." These articles contain no explanation whatever, as to the sense in which the Son and Spirit are divine; and they are so vague, that I strongly suspect they were drawn up by a Tuckerite. The lowest Arian, or even a Socinian, might very well be their author. And now I leave you to judge who practices "Jesuitism," and whose "assertions are completely false."

Here I wish to raise my warning voice. The plague is in your camp, and, I fear, is spreading. A man who had published to the world, that such a God as the trinitarians worship, must be an idiot, and who has denounced their worship as idolatry, is employed as the editor of your Magazine, to furnish you with the bread of life from the press; and his name is put upon your plan, as an accredited preacher of the glorious gospel of Christ, to minister to your spiritual wants from the

pulpit. If this man has a conscience, and believes what he says, he must have laboured hard to bring you from the idolatrous worship of an idiot, to the spiritual worship of the true God. He cannot be sincere in the belief of his own creed, without endeavouring to proselyte your people to it. And I believe the omission of the trinity in your list of doctrines, and the wording of these doctrines so as to harmonise with his creed, is owing to the spread of his errors among the Protestants. And what sort of a divine Saviour is proclaimed among you by the preachers of this new gospel? Why one who, the moment he appeared in this world, forgot his errand.* I should be afraid that such a thoughtless divinity could scarcely be trusted to, as the great God and our Saviour. In this new system, the dregs of the lowest Arianism are mixed up with a worse than phrenological materialism; and the composition is not a whit better than downright Socinianism. I hope John Kirkbride and William Myers will learn to be a little more cautious how they "boldly assert" things, in their next advertisement. I have shown, I think, that they are rather more bold than prudent: but a man's zeal will not always allow his conscience to boggle.

Now for the Holbeck case. The main particulars of that case, as detailed in my second letter, were collected from the leader who has been so shamefully treated by the authorities at Leeds. I did not, however, trust implicitly to his representations; information from numerous other quarters corroborated his statements. I have since seen this leader, who authorises me to state, in the most public manner, that both himself and his class have been deprived of their

* This results from Mr. T.'s philosophy, as requiring the contraction, or compression of the mental powers of this divinity, to suit his union with a human body in an embryo state; which we have already observed must have deprived him of all ideas, and consequently of the idea that he was a Saviour. And as Mr. T. allows him, during his union with a body, no other means of acquiring knowledge than what other men possess, I wish he had informed us when and how he recollected himself, that instead of being an ordinary mortal he was an "essential divinity!"

society tickets for the two last quarters ; and this without having been tried before any tribunal, or having received any notice of trial. These are the principal facts of the case ; and these he stated in the presence of myself and Mr. Calder ; and Mr. Calder is ready to attest the truth of my report if it be called in question.

I said in my letter, that " a leader and his class, at Holbeck, were all turned out of society by a single elder, without any trial at all." Upon this statement John Kirkbride and William Myers affirm, they know well " that these assertions are completely false." If completely false ; then it is true, that they were not turned out of society, and that they had a trial. And what authority do these stewards produce in evidence of their bold assertion ? They say, " In proof of which we annex the following resolutions of the Holbeck leaders' meeting upon the subject : 1. That the following statement contained in Mr. Isaac's second letter, is not only incorrect but false. ' When the proper season arrived, an elder from Leeds, a great stickler, no doubt, for the liberties of Englishmen, attended at Holbeck to renew the society's tickets. When he came to the class of the re-elected leader, he refused tickets to him and all his members.' 2. That the following statement is also false, p. 32 : ' The Holbeck leaders were highly indignant at this mode of treatment of one of their members and his class, and held a parley with the meek-spirited elders of Leeds, at the last quarterly meeting ; but these gentlemen, partly by threats, that they could convert the Holbeck society into an independent church ; and partly by promises, that the affair should be presented for final adjudication to the next yearly meeting, obtained a trifling majority in favour of a despotic act, which never had its equal in our connexion.' "

Now, so far are the Holbeck leaders from asserting, that the passage selected by the Leeds stewards is " completely false," that they do not refer to it at all ! Nor is there a word in the quotations they make from my letter, respecting any trial of either the leader or

his class! And what is still more remarkable, the words which immediately follow their last extract from my letter, are these, "Neither the leader nor his members were tried by a leaders' meeting, or received any notice of trial before any tribunal whatever." Is it not very singular, that the Holbeck leaders, who were to prove me "completely false," in saying, the leader and his class had no trial at all, should have stopped short just when they came to that part of the subject! As the Holbeck leaders dare not put their negative upon that statement; and as the leader himself is quite positive in the affirmative; I shall consider this point, (that the leader and his class were not tried at all,) as "completely" established.

As to the other particular, that "a leader and his class were all turned out of society," I admit that the Holbeck leaders put their negative upon a passage which amounts to the same thing, where they charge me with falsehood in saying, that the tickets were refused to the leader and all his members. Here then I am fairly at issue with the leaders' meetings of both Leeds and Holbeck. I affirm, on the testimony of the leader himself, given already, that neither he nor his members received their tickets for the last two quarters, and that they have consequently been put out of society, by being deprived of the token of membership. This, both leaders' meetings affirm to be false. That the public may judge between us, let it be considered, 1. That my evidence is the testimony of the leader in question, delivered in the presence of myself and Mr. Calder, with full leave to make it public. 2. If the tickets were really given, is it credible that the man should persevere in affirming the contrary, to the disgrace of both himself and the society with which he is connected? 3. If the tickets were given, why is not the elder produced who gave them? He is the proper witness; and would undoubtedly be forthcoming, if his testimony could help his brethren in this time of need. What nonsense is it to be holding leaders' meetings in Leeds and Holbeck

to disprove an allegation, which cannot be disproved but by a certain individual. If you cannot bring him forward, it is a lost case.

Just as the above was going to press, the Churchman's second letter made its appearance; and as it contains some important concessions on the Holbeck case, I must make a few remarks. The following is his version of the affair: "A Protestant leader at Holbeck is deprived of his office and membership. He shortly afterwards is admitted as a private member. He is then proposed and re-elected a leader at the Holbeck leaders' meeting; too early after the commission of his offence, in the opinion of some of the members of that meeting, and too early, in the opinion also of a very large majority of the quarterly meeting, to whom they appealed. The resolution of the Holbeck meeting of course fell to the ground. Still dissatisfied, the Holbeck leaders agitate the question at the ensuing quarterly meeting; the discussion is of the most friendly nature, and terminates in an agreement, that the case shall again be referred to the decision of the meeting; (at which, as well as the former one, the dissentients themselves had the right of voting;) when the resolution of the former meeting is confirmed, and, by a large majority. This is the entire case."* And a pretty case it is!

In the main particulars, it agrees with my representation. I stated that the first quarterly meeting which took cognizance of the leader's case, "decreed that his re-election was void." The Churchman admits this, when he states that by a very large majority of the quarterly meeting "the resolution of the Holbeck meeting fell to the ground." I state, and so does the churchman, that the Holbeck leaders were dissatisfied with the decision of this quarterly meeting, and agitate the question again the next quarter day. An important question arises here, and that is, were the leader and his class members of society in the interval between the two quarterly meetings? I did not understand that the first quarterly meeting had expelled the leader and his class, but merely annulled the re-election of the leader. If this were the fact, he and his class were clearly entitled to their tickets, as private members; and as the rules say, "The duties of elders are, to renew the tickets at the quarterly visitation of the classes;" I took it for granted that an elder had attended the class in question, and that the tickets were not withheld without a word being spoken to the parties. In this, it seems, I was mistaken; for the Churchman remarks upon this part of my narrative, "No elder from Leeds, in the discharge of his duties at Holbeck, ever came in contact, either with the deprived leader, or with a

* A Second Letter, pp. 12, 13.

single individual of his class, on any occasion whatever, since the period of his expulsion."* The period I refer to in my narrative is prior to the second quarterly meeting which discussed this subject; and the Churchman's statement would be no contradiction of mine, if the leader were not expelled at the first of these quarterly meetings.

Take the Churchman's account of the affair instead of mine, and welcome; and it will be manifest to every one that my great fault has been, in not representing the affair one-tenth part so bad as it turns out to be. 1. The quarterly meeting has deprived the leaders' meeting of the right of electing its own members; contrary to the rule, which says, "The leaders' meeting shall be composed of elders, preachers on full plan, leaders, society stewards, poor stewards, and trustees. But on the appointment or trial of leaders, the leaders alone shall be allowed to vote;" and the rule goes on to state, that "when a leader is wanted for a class, the leaders' meeting shall nominate a person to fill that office;" and after a process of examination, "If approved by a majority, he shall be considered a member of the leaders' meeting, and his appointment to the class, for which he was put in nomination, shall then be confirmed."† But the Churchman admits, that, by a "majority of the quarterly meeting, the resolution of the Holbeck meeting fell to the ground; and that the Holbeck leaders were dissatisfied with this interference of the quarterly meeting.

2. The quarterly meeting has deprived the leaders' meeting of the power of trying its own members; contrary to the rule cited above, and also contrary to another rule, page 17, made, as it expressly declares, "To prevent everything like unfair and clandestine expulsions;" and which enacts that "the leaders' meeting shall determine whether the offending brother shall be expelled from the society; but the right of appeal to the quarterly meeting, shall be preserved in this as in every other case." "In every other case" of appeal, mentioned in the rules, the right is restricted to the defendant; but in this instance the defendant made no appeal; for the leaders' meeting, instead of expelling him, elected him a leader. On this occasion the leaders' meeting did not try him as to his membership, but as to his fitness to be a leader; and the law allows of no appeal in such a case. According to the Churchman, therefore, the quarterly meeting took the affair of the man's expulsion entirely out of the hands of the leaders' meeting, where the law had lodged it.

3. "No elder from Leeds, in the discharge of his duties at Holbeck, ever came in contact, either with the deprived leader, or with a single individual of his class, on any occasion whatever, since the period of his expulsion." This is one of the most singular declarations ever made. It does not say their, but his expulsion.

* A Second Letter, p. 13. † Rules, pp. 16, 17.

But if they were not expelled by the quarterly meeting, and it is not pretended that they were expelled by their own leaders' meeting, then it was clearly the duty of an elder to visit these people; and it was my taking it for granted that he had done so, which led me into error. No; the quarterly meeting had smitten the shepherd which the Holbeck leaders had appointed, and the sheep were scattered abroad; and the pastors, as the elders are called, take care never to come into contact with a single individual of them! Most astonishing! Are these poor sheep to be abandoned, and deprived of all their privileges, because their guide is supposed to have gone astray? If an elder never came near them after the expulsion of their leader, then they were expelled the society; for the rule says, page 12, "The mode of excluding a private member shall be by withholding the ensuing quarterly ticket." The tickets must have been withheld, since the elders, whose office it is to give them, never came into "contact with a single individual" of them. It is not pretended that the Holbeck leaders' meeting put these people out of society; and no other power, according to their laws, had any right to do it. The law says, page 12, "Private members of society shall be tried by the leaders' meeting, and if dissatisfied with the decision of such meeting, the accused person shall have the right of appeal to the quarterly meeting, whose decision shall be final." In giving us "the entire case," the Churchman has not dropped a hint that these private members were tried at all, though that was a most material part of the case; but only assures us, that from the time of the expulsion of their leader, they were abandoned by the elders, as though "contact" with them would have been dangerous.

The Churchman falls foul upon me for giving credit to the leader, as a perjured man. What he insisted upon were, 1. That he and his class had been deprived of their tickets and membership. The Churchman admits this. 2. That they had no trial, or notice of trial. The Churchman does not pretend that they were summoned as culprits to be tried by their own leaders' meeting, or that, in point of fact, they were tried at all by that meeting. Will he call what passed at the quarterly meeting, a trial? What! when the tribunal is illegal, and the accused are not called to answer for themselves! If this be a trial, it is worse than the inquisition; for the poor wretches there have the privilege of appearing before their judges, and answering for themselves. No, Mr. Churchman, I do not want the evidence of the leader any longer. You shall be my voucher, for the future, for all I learned from the leader, and a great deal more! and for this I thank you. Your passion has betrayed you into disclosures for which you will not very soon, I think, forgive yourself.

I remarked in my last, "With the fitness or unfitness for his office of the leader in question, I have nothing to do. Suppose, if you please, that he is every way qualified for it; and then the

injustice of the treatment he has received is vividly apparent. If you suppose him to be unworthy, you see the necessity of a controlling power somewhere, to correct the errors of subordinate jurisdictions, and to bring them into harmony with the general system. This is the business of special district meetings; and you cannot object to these, if you imitate them."

It is a poor gloss of the Churchman, which he mentions twice, because he has nothing better to offer, that the Holbeck dissentient leaders had a vote in the quarterly meeting which reversed their decision. What a mighty favour to have the privilege of being out-voted by a meeting which sets aside their local jurisdictions!

Let us then look at this modern Protestantism, as it is depicted by the gentle Churchman. Take a peep at the state of things at Holbeck. The leader in question is called a "culprit—a man who had just before excluded himself from a religious society by the perpetration of the revolting enormity of marrying his wife's sister, under circumstances of disgusting indecorum, and who accomplished this shocking crime, by thrice perjuring himself upon the gospels." He that can believe this, and that the Holbeck leaders were determined to have the man in office, and that it required two quarterly meetings to vote them down and silence them, will very naturally think, that with all their boasting of superior sanctity, the old Methodists have not lost much by the secession of men of such exquisite moral sensibility, as these Holbeck leaders. My notions of Protestant purity did not run very high, but I cannot believe they are in quite so bad a state, though attested by a Protestant advocate, under the cloak of a "Churchman."

If you come to Leeds, you are dinned almost to death with shouts of liberty, by those who have accomplished their emancipation from the old connexion. Go to a quarterly meeting, and you find them trampling the local jurisdictions under foot without any ceremony, and contrary to all law. Compare also the advertisers with the Churchman, and you will find them completely at variance in several important matters; and in particular, that the advertisers deny the leader was turned out of society, and the Churchman admits it.

If the Protestants would let us alone, I should not concern myself about their affairs; but when they have publicly declared that the Leeds case shall not die, I think myself justified in showing that they have a case of their own, ten times worse than anything they can allege against us. A leader and his class at Holbeck have been deprived of their tickets and membership, without any trial or notice of trial, contrary to the laws of their connexion. This is treating the local authorities, who, according to their rules, have the power to try their own members, with the most sovereign contempt. Our special district meeting dare not do business in this style. Those who were put out of our society at Leeds, at

the time the special district meeting was being holden, were regularly summoned to take their trial, and were tried by their own leaders. Our special district meeting merely gave the superintendent advice; and that advice was, to abide by the laws of the connexion; but your officers have broken through the laws, as though they were cobwebs, and cavalierly cut off from communion at a stroke, a whole class, without any trial at all. Our preachers are as timid as hares, compared with these lion-faced gentlemen! Pray let us hear no more of the Leeds case, till the mystery of the Holbeck case be cleared up. Mighty efforts have been made, since my letters came out, to settle the difference with this leader; and the authorities must yield to him, or all the dirt will come out.

I have now finished the task which I proposed, and shall not further interfere in the controversy, unless circumstances should arise, to make it necessary or expedient. I trust I have succeeded in showing, that our ministry stands upon the basis of sacred writ. This I consider as infinitely more important than the Leeds case, the Holbeck case, or any other case which may arise. None of the Protestant writers have attempted to show, what their system so much requires, that in scripture, an itinerant minister is ever subjected to a local preacher, or elder, or any local officer. Now I have produced abundant evidence in proof, that itinerants created the local officers, and presided over them; and this with those who regard the authority of the Bible, will be decisive of the controversy. Nothing I ever did has given me greater satisfaction than the scriptural proof I have adduced in support of our ministry. May God make it a thousand-fold more successful!

I shall conclude by reminding the Protestants of the two important facts, 1. That your system of discipline has been proved, in many important particulars, to be in direct opposition to the word of God. 2. In doctrine I have showed you are not incorrupt; the lowest and most disgusting Arianism has been introduced among you by your spiritual guides, is working among you, and threatens you with ruin. Escape for your lives!

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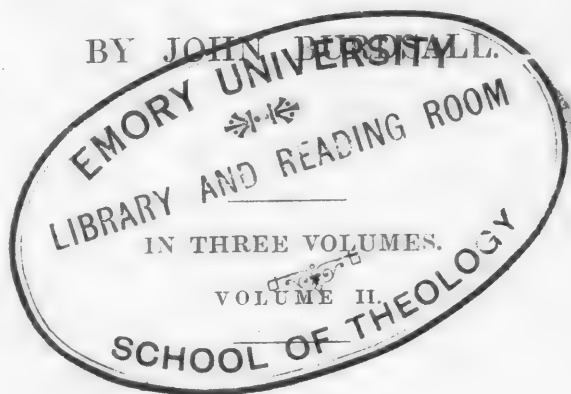


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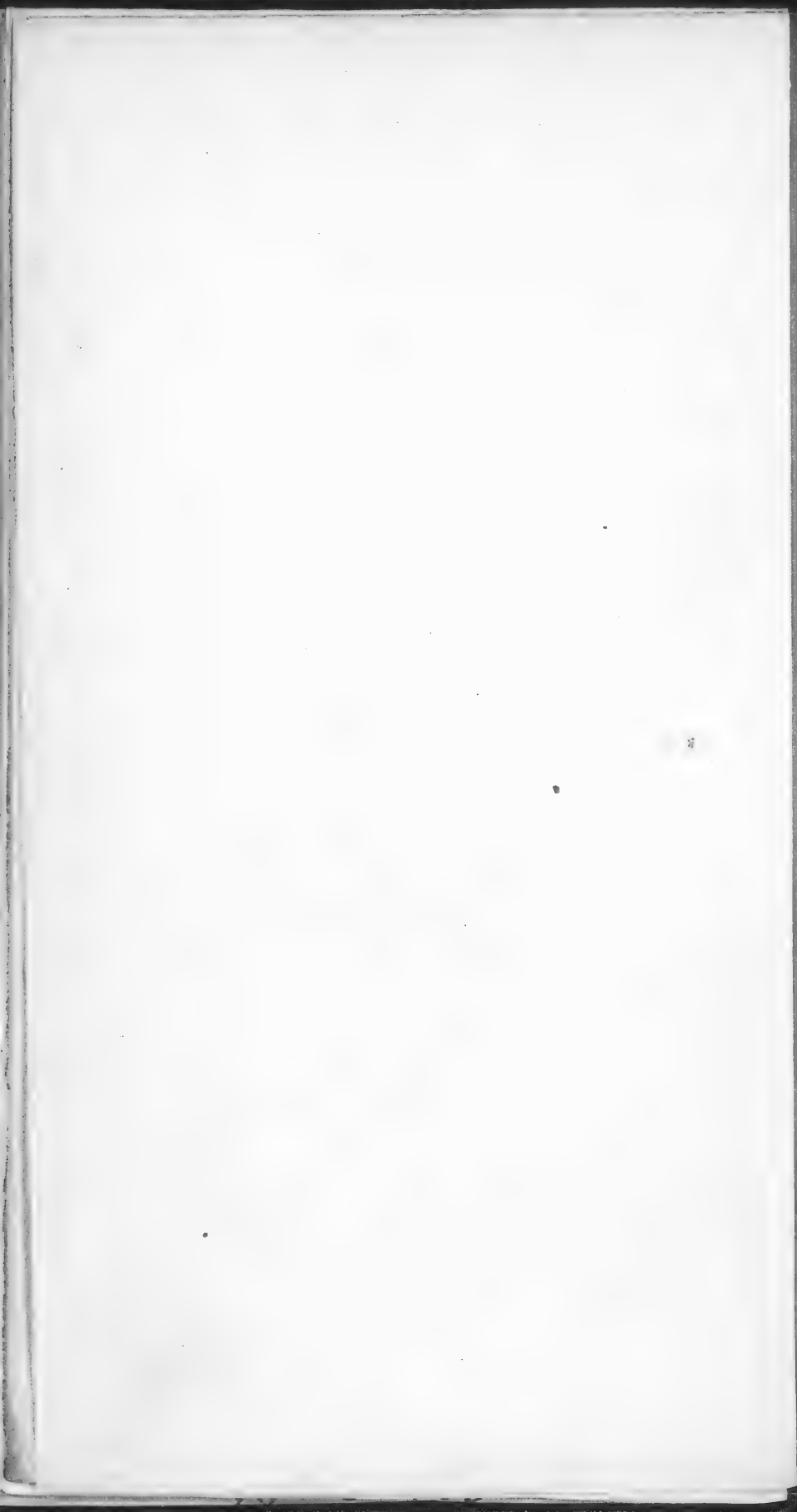
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PREFACE.

MANY excellent books have unquestionably been written upon the subject of Infant Baptism ; and some are of opinion that the evidences in its support, have been so frequently and so fully brought before the public, as to supersede the necessity of an additional volume. The author begs leave, most respectfully, to express his conviction to the contrary : he thinks that just such a work as the present was very much wanted. Many are still going over from other communions to the baptists ; and these will tell you, that they can perceive no solid proof of the right of infants to the ordinance, in any of the publications you may have put into their hands. The religious body to which the author belongs, has furnished its full quota, both of members and ministers, to the baptist churches ; and as he is not aware that they have really benefited by the change, and has a strong persuasion of the propriety of giving the ordinance to the infants of christian parents, of the great impropriety of delaying it, and of the sinfulness of repeating it, he feels it a duty to try to preserve the minds of his friends from perplexity, and their religious character from even the shadow of turning.

The church membership of little ones is connected with their baptism. The baptists have justly complained of the inconsistency of many sects, in giving their children the ordinance, and yet denying them the fellowship of saints. What is said in the following pages on the promises made to christian parents re-

specting the salvation of their children, and on the course of holy training in the church, by which the promises are to be carried into effect, is humbly but earnestly recommended to the most serious consideration of ministers and heads of families. This is the practical part of the subject; and if an increased attention be given to these points, the author will rejoice that he has not laboured in vain.

A very sensible and pious pamphlet has been addressed to the Methodist Conference by Mr. Mc. Donald, in which he has ably enforced the necessity and importance of placing the children of members, under the pastoral care of the leaders and ministers. This subject will surely be taken up with all that seriousness which a matter of such infinite moment merits and demands.

The baptists contend that, if infants are entitled to membership, they are also entitled to the Lord's supper. How does the consequence follow? The two ordinances differ in their nature, are given upon different grounds, and have different ends to serve. They are never mentioned in connexion in the New Testament; nor is there a word respecting a right to one, including in it a right to the other. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup," is the precept relating to the supper. As soon as a child is capable of this, and gives evidence of possessing a pious disposition, there is no divine warrant to keep it from the Lord's table. The same qualifications are not required of a candidate for baptism.

The reader will expect, as a matter of course, to find retailed in these pages, the principal arguments which are usually employed by writers on the same side of the question; and in this he will not be disappointed. As these arguments are now considered as common stock, and the original proprietors are unknown, it

was not deemed necessary to refer to any particular author, except when his words are cited.

Mr. Peter Edwards's "Candid Reasons for renouncing the Principles of Antipedobaptism," is clear, argumentative, and upon the main points of the controversy, decisive. But he has conceded much more to the baptists than truth will warrant. The editor of Calmet, in his "Facts and Evidences on the subject of Baptism," has favoured the christian world with much very valuable matter. Only a small portion of what he has written was at all suited to the plan of this work. These pages are, however, enriched with a few extracts from that masterly performance; which will have the effect, it is hoped, of inducing the reader to peruse the whole. It is not a little surprising that so candid a writer as Mr. Birt, in glancing at this author, should speak of "the very frivolous distinction lately attempted between house and household." The distinction, in this controversy, is certainly an important one; and it is supported by a body of evidence which may bid defiance to attack.

Upon so hackneyed a subject, it may be thought that nothing new can be said. There is much in these sheets, which the writer has not met with in any other work; but this may be owing to his having seen but few pedobaptist publications. The truth of the matter is, he has read much more on the baptist side of the question than on the other; and their arguments appeared to him to have so little weight, that he did not feel the want of much assistance in combating them.

The author is rather intimately acquainted with some of the baptists; and believes there are many very eminent christians in their churches. He has carefully avoided saying anything which might grieve or irritate a pious mind. The spirit of a controversial work should be suited to the characters against whom it is directed. When you have to do with persecuting

bigots, you may lawfully place them in the pillory, and innocently smile while you view the contortions of their visages. The difference among real christians ought to be discussed ; but the debate must be managed in the spirit of candour and meekness. A writer never loses his temper, till he is at a loss for an argument. It is certainly very provoking to be exposed to the balls of an enemy, when you have no ammunition left, except powder, and can only oppose to his killing arguments, the harmless but noisy explosion of angry words. The writer of these pages has not felt himself in this unpleasant predicament ; and he has too much respect for the learning and piety of his baptist friends, to treat what he conceives to be their mistakes, with either ridicule or contempt.

Should any baptist gentleman honour this production with public notice, he is desired to attend to the following particulars : —

1. Not to charge the author with the opinions of other pedobaptists, since he will be responsible for none but his own. Mr. Booth has made a large collection of the concessions and silly remarks of his opponents ; and nearly every baptist writer since, has taken freely from his storehouse. If an attempt were made to retort in this way, materials are in great plenty ; but the interests of truth would not be served by it.

2. To try his strength against the principal arguments, upon which the stress is laid. For instance, let him show, in opposition to the proofs adduced to the contrary, (1.) That spiritual qualifications are required of all candidates for the ordinance. (2.) That a single individual in New Testament times, received a single day's instruction prior to his baptism. (3.) That the station assigned to baptism in scripture, is not at the commencement of christianity. (4.) That the remission of sin, the gift of the Spirit, and sanctification, are

not subsequents of baptism. If he cannot successfully controvert these points, the principles upon which his practice is founded are annihilated, and the propriety of the baptism of believers' children in the period of infancy, as introductory to christian instruction, discipline, and privilege, is as clearly demonstrated as any moral question can be.

If he complain of the precepts and precedents in support of infant baptism as not sufficiently explicit, he is particularly requested to furnish precepts and precedents for female communion, which are more to the point. If he cannot do this, it is hoped he will either be satisfied with our evidence, or deny the right of women to the Lord's supper. The precepts and precedents are supposed to furnish decisive proofs of pedobaptism. Among the latter, the fact of little children being recognised as members of the churches of Ephesus and Colosse, is recommended to serious attention.

3. If the main arguments are not touched, it will not be deemed a refutation of the work, to point out some minor mistakes. Suppose the reasonings on Mark x. 13—16; Romans xi. 16—24; 1 Corinthians vii. 14, are shown to be inconclusive; infant baptism is not disproved. These, and twenty other arguments may be given up, and the doctrine will still rest upon an immovable basis.

4. Should this writer, however, be driven from the ground he has taken, he will not retreat far, before he will take up a new position. The distance is great between infancy and adult age. If it be proved that knowledge and faith are necessary qualifications, does it follow that none but adults can possess these requisites? Suppose the children of the jailer were adults, they had only about half an hour's instruction prior to their baptism. Cannot a child, whose christian education commences at three years of age, and is closely

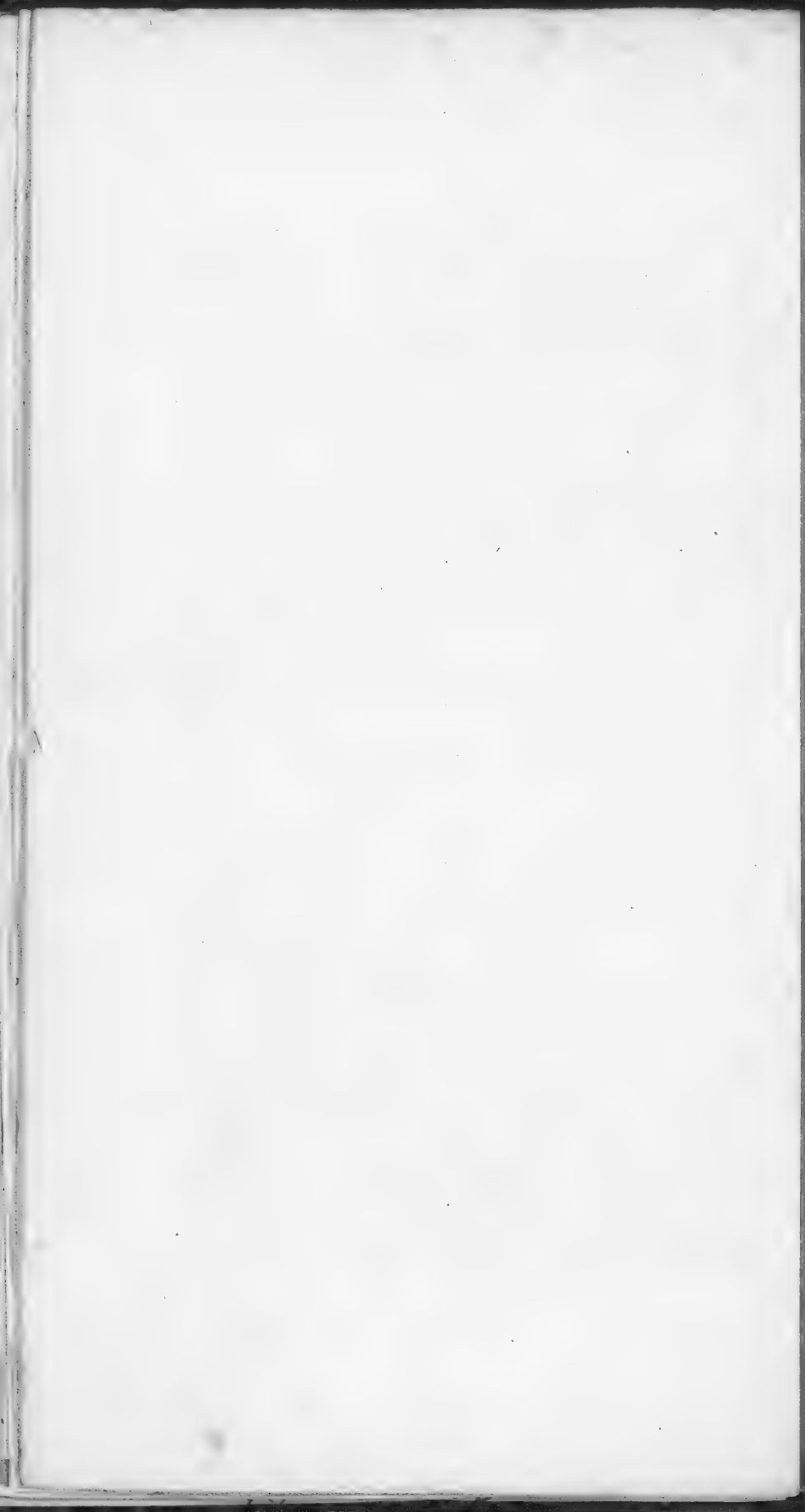
attended to, acquire as much knowledge and faith in thirty months, as the jailer's children could do in thirty minutes? Believers' baptism may be given to children between the ages of three and six; and these juveniles may know quite as much of religion as the adult New Testament subjects; none of whom were taught a whole day, and some of them not an hour, prior to the reception of the rite. Here then a parley might be sounded; upon this new ground the hostile armies might meet, and adjust their differences. The pedobaptists would only have to delay the ordinance for three or four years; and the baptists would only have to give up adult baptism in the case of those who should enjoy the privilege of a christian education from infancy, while they would have the high gratification of giving believers' baptism to all!

But if adult baptism be contended for, as the only legal one, the baptists will be put to the proof, that all the children, of whose baptism we have any intimation in the New Testament, were adults. This, it is thought, will be a rather difficult piece of business.

The arguments drawn from antiquity are not discussed in these sheets. What cannot be proved from scripture, cannot have authority; you may prove any thing you wish from the fathers, but your demonstrations from their writings are not rules of faith.

The identity of the Abrahamic with the christian covenant, and the equal eligibility of infants under both dispensations, to the blessings of the covenant, and the rite of initiation, are but briefly treated on in the following pages; not because the author had any doubt of the validity of the argument, but because other writers have entered into it largely, and done it justice. This work was nearly ready for the press before the author obtained a sight of the publications of Messrs. Gibbs and Birt. On reviewing what he has written upon this subject, he does not see occasion

to alter a line ; for though he has not formally refuted them, he conceives he has established principles which will overturn their representations. As both these writers object to the covenant of circumcision being called the covenant of grace, it was felt as a great disappointment that neither of them condescended to explain the following clause: "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will be their God." These words seem to contain some little grace, and in this view they have usually been urged as weighty by the pedobaptists. Upon two or three other topics, a few observations of Mr. Gibbs's have been introduced into the body of this work, and replied to.



BAPTISM DISCUSSED.

CHAPTER I.

ON POSITIVE INSTITUTIONS, AND WHAT CONSTITUTE A RIGHT TO THEM.

THERE are only two positive institutions belonging to the christian religion,—baptism, and the Lord's supper. That kind and degree of evidence which is necessary to prove a person's right to one of these ordinances, must be necessary to prove a right to the other.

Our baptist friends contend strenuously, that an infant cannot be entitled to baptism, unless a precept or precedent from the New Testament can be produced in support of it; and since there is no command or example relating to the ordinance, in which infants are expressly mentioned, their right to it is denied.

The eucharist is admitted to be as much a positive institute as baptism. But females are never mentioned in the New Testament in either the precepts or examples relating to it; they have, therefore, no more right, according to the baptists' mode of arguing, to receive the Lord's supper, than infants have to receive baptism.

This is a very embarrassing subject to our differing brethren; they admit women to the table, though they forbid water to little ones; and yet it is quite certain, that the scriptures are no more express for female communion, than for infant baptism. As our brethren, however, annul our baptisms for want of an express scripture warrant, they acknowledge that they are obliged, on their own principles, to give us an express

scripture warrant, in favour of their females. Most of the baptist writers, to be sure, have the prudence to pass over the subject of female communion in silence but some of their more distinguished advocates have felt that they must say something upon it. Their arguments upon this point are amusing ; and as I have never met with any which are not contained in Mr. Booth's book, I will entertain my reader with a detail of them.

"Does not Paul, when he says, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat,' enjoin a reception of the sacred supper?" Certainly. "Does not the term *anthropos* there used, often stand as a name of our species, without regard to sex?" It does often ; and I shall show presently, that it often denotes the male sex, as distinguished from the female. "Have we not the authority of lexicographers, and, which is incomparably more, the sanction of common sense, for understanding it thus in that passage?" It is the business of a lexicographer to give us the sense of a word ; but when it has more than one meaning, it is the business of a commentator to inform us of its import in any particular passage. When a lexicographer says that a certain word has often such a meaning, he leaves us to infer that it is sometimes taken in another sense ; and then his authority cannot settle which is the true meaning, wherever it occurs. What lexicographer says that *anthropos* always includes the female sex ? And as to common sense,—how is that to settle the meaning of a Greek word ? "When the sexes are distinguished and opposed, the word for a man is not *anthropos*, but *aner*." This is not true. Mr. Peter Edwards has produced no less than nineteen instances out of the Bible, in which, when the sexes are distinguished and opposed, the word for a man is *anthropos*, and not *aner*. And a hundred texts, he remarks, may be produced from the New Testament, where the word *anthropos* does not include the female sex. This text, therefore, is not at all express for female communion. The English word man, like the Greek word *anthropos*,

is often used as a name of our species ; but no one ever supposed that it always includes women. Besides, the masculine pronoun is used : " Let a man examine himself." The authorised version of this text has never, that I know of, been objected to ; and unless it can be shown that the words, " Let a man examine himself," mean, " Let a woman examine herself," this passage is far enough from being express in favour of female communion. I hope infants are as clearly included in all nations, who are commanded to be baptised, as women are included in the word man !

" Besides, when the apostle delivered to the church at Corinth, what he had received of the Lord, did he not deliver a command—a command to the whole church, consisting of women as well as men?" What he received of the Lord, he states in the words which immediately follow : " For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread : and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat," etc. Here he delivered to the Corinthians the command which our Lord gave to his apostles, the same night in which he was betrayed. But that was no command to women, because none of the sex were present. But does not the apostle extend the command to the whole church at Corinth, consisting of women as well as men ? He neither mentions the whole church, nor women. Does every command delivered to a church, respect every member of it, both male and female ? Then, when the apostle commanded this church (1 Cor. v.) to excommunicate the incestuous person, he commanded the whole church, women as well as men. That is, he constituted an ecclesiastical court, consisting partly of ladies, to try a man for the crime of incest ! and associated them with men in pronouncing judgment upon the delinquent !

A fine way of showing an express command for female communion ! 1. Our Lord gave a command to men. 2. The apostle refers the Corinthians to the primitive institution, with a view to correct some evils

which they had connected with the ordinance. 3. The apostle delivers a command to the Corinthians to keep to the primitive institution. 4. The command to the Corinthians must include the whole church, or we are no nearer the conclusion than when we started; and yet he says nothing about the whole church in this command; and we have seen, that to interpret all his commands as relating to the whole church, would be the extreme of absurdity. But allow the command might be delivered to the whole church—why then, 5. It can be proved that there were women in the church at Corinth. And then, 6. The inference,—and what a remote inference!—may be drawn, that women are entitled to the Lord's supper. Thank God, we have not to go such a round-about way to prove infant baptism.

“When he further says, ‘We being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread;’ does he not speak of women, as well as of men?” (1 Cor. x. 17.) It so happens, that the apostle has mentioned in express terms, to whom he spake these words: “I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread,” etc. Women, I grant, may be included in this passage, but it is far enough from being express in their favour. Instead of their participation of the sacred rite being expressed, it can at most be only inferred. If such texts as these are “explicit warrants,” as Mr. B. calls them, “for admitting women to the holy table,” we can easily produce many warrants, quite as explicit, for infant baptism.

“Again; are there any pre-requisites for the holy supper, of which women are not equally capable as men?” Certainly not; and, therefore, I think, this a good argument. But it is of no use to the baptists, because they deny that any one has a right to a positive institute, in whose behalf neither a precept nor a

precedent can be found in the Bible. This had been the burden of Mr. B.'s song through more than seventy pages, in opposition to infant baptism. At last he bethought himself, that his reader might possibly turn round upon him, and demand, Pray, sir, where is your precept, or precedent, for female communion? O, says he, you shall have it. Hem; come, sir, the precept or precedent! "Why, are there any pre-requisites for the holy supper of which women are not capable?" Pre-requisites! are these either precepts or precedents? If a qualification for a seat at the Lord's table be a sufficiently explicit warrant to occupy it, without either precept or precedent, then a qualification for baptism is a sufficient title to it, though neither a command nor an example can be produced in favour of the qualified subjects. That infants are qualified for baptism will be proved in the proper place.

"And are not male and female one in Christ?" Here is an explicit warrant for you! It is explicit enough for females being in Christ; but not a word, nor hint, respecting the holy supper; their right to that is inferred from their interest in the Saviour; and a far-fetched inference it is. If it be a good argument, that because females are in Christ, as well as males, they have an equal right with males to the eucharist; the premises will just as well support another consequence, namely, that females have an equal right with males to the ministry. The argument goes upon the principle, that an equality of interest in Christ among men and women, give an equality of right to his institutions; if this be denied, the argument is good for nothing; and if it be admitted as valid, it must follow, that since the ministry is as much an institution of the Saviour, as the eucharist, the ladies have, on this ground, as good a right to stand up in the pulpit, as to sit at the Lord's table. But the baptists admit that infants may be in Christ, as well as adults; for they allow that such as die in infancy are saved, and saved by Christ. It will, therefore, follow according to this

baptist argument, that infants have an explicit warrant to be admitted to baptism and the Lord's supper, since they have clearly an interest in the Saviour.

The above is all Mr. B. has said in proof of female communion, with the exception of a quotation from an heathen writer. Now where is the express warrant? where the precept, or precedent? You may as well look for it in the first chapter of Genesis, as in what is here produced. The New Testament is express enough in favour of female baptism. The Samaritans "were baptised, both men and women." "Lydia was baptised." (Acts viii. 12; xvi. 14, 15.) Upon such texts as these, you need ask no questions, nor employ any reasonings; they are no sooner read, than they are perceived to be decisive. The baptists know they cannot produce anything like this in favour of female communion.

I am not objecting against the right of females to the sacred supper. I think there are more substantial reasons for it than those which Mr. B. has given; and to my mind, they are perfectly satisfactory; but to talk of express warrants, precepts, and precedents, upon this subject, is egregious trifling; there are no such things. It is time for me to ask a few questions:—

1. Is not the eucharist as much a positive institute as baptism?

2. Is more evidence necessary to justify a right to one than to the other?

3. If so, state the different degrees of evidence necessary to constitute a right to each; and show the reasons why more evidence is required in one case than in the other.

4. In particular, explain why a precept or precedent is necessary to entitle an infant to baptism, though neither be necessary to entitle a woman to participate in the supper. Or,—

5. Show us the precept or precedent for female communion. Or,—

6. Let the baptists withhold the communion from women? Or,—

7. Let them no longer demand either precept or precedent for infant baptism.

I suspect that Mr. Booth, on reviewing his express warrants for female communion, felt that they would not do; for he immediately adds, "When we oppose the baptism of infants, it is not because of their tender age; but because they neither do nor can profess faith in the Son of God. Whenever we meet with such as are denominated by the apostle, faithful, or believing children; whoever may be their parents, or whatever may be their age, we have no objection to baptise them. A credible profession of repentance and faith being all we desire, in reference to this affair, either of old or young."*

Astonishing! and so if the little ones had but the necessary qualifications, nothing more is desired, whether there be or be not any scripture precepts or precedents for infant baptism. But then our hopes are blasted again when we are informed, that they neither do nor can possess these qualifications. But what if they happen to have scriptural qualifications, I hope Mr. B.'s may be dispensed with; and the concession extorted from him is an important one, that however tender the age of a child may be, it ought to receive the ordinance, if it be but qualified for it. Now for the qualifications:—

1. It must make "a credible profession of repentance." And where is this written? Did our Lord make a credible profession of repentance?

2. It must make "a credible profession of faith." What faith? Justifying? Then Jesus ought not to have been baptised; for he was justified by works. Faith in the messiahship of Jesus? An infant three years old is capable of this. It will be shown in the course of the work, that neither repentance nor faith were ever made a condition of baptism, and that infants are as fit subjects of it as adults.

There is neither command nor example for baptising

* *Pedobaptism Examined*. Vol. ii., pp. 73—75.

the children of christian parents when they are grown up. Our baptist brethren assign reasons why they think the baptism of believers' children was delayed, though scripture is silent on the subject. And we assign reasons why we believe infants were baptised by the apostles, though they are not named. Now we wish to know why the want of commands and examples must nullify all our reasons, and yet cannot touch one of theirs. Any impartial person, I presume, will allow, that if a baptist can justify his practice, though he have neither command nor example to support it, then it is possible we may be able to justify ours, though infants are never expressly mentioned in connexion with the ordinance. It is not, therefore, a sufficient answer to our reasons, to say, I will not believe in infant baptism, unless you can produce a precept or precedent for it; for he can have no right to demand more evidence for our practice, than he is willing to give in defence of his own.

Dr. Mayo had remarked, "They (the baptists) have not a single precedent in scripture of their subjects of baptism, the children of christian parents, whose baptism was delayed till they were of adult years, to make a profession of their faith." Mr. Booth replied: "But if this objection have any weight, it must lie with equal force against the continuance of baptism among christians; or the administration of it to any description of subjects, except in reference to such persons as are converted from Judaism, Mahomedanism, or paganism." I think exactly with Mr. B. upon this point; I only regret that he did not sooner discover the fallacy of this argument. In the mouth of Dr. Mayo it was only a retort. Mr. B. had been toiling through seventy pages, to prove the unlawfulness of pedobaptism, because there are neither precepts nor precedents for it in the New Testament. When he had nearly finished his demonstration, he recollected how the Dr. had used this baptist weapon against the baptist system. Mr. B. does not pretend that he can find his subjects of the ordinance in the

Bible; and yet he will not allow us to retort his argument about precepts and precedents. Why? Because it would destroy the permanency of the rite; he therefore concludes, that it is of no weight. Astonishing! What we complain of is, that our brethren should continue to press us with an argument which they grant is good for nothing, and which will just as well overturn their system, and the ordinance altogether, as infant baptism.

There is neither precept nor example for baptising a youth, or an old person. To this the baptists reply, that they do not object to the baptism of infants, because they are infants, but because they do not and cannot believe. Very well. Where is the command to baptise believers? No such text can be found in the Bible. But if it could, it would no more conclude against the baptism of infants, than the promise of salvation to believers, does against the salvation of infants. It will probably be said, that there is a command to baptise disciples, Matthew xviii. 19, and that disciples were believers. Some of the disciples were believers, and some of them believed not. (See John vi. 60—66.) This command, therefore, is quite as express for the baptism of unbelievers, as of believers.

Still our brethren exult in it, that they have examples of the baptism of believers. This no one pretends to deny. And John baptised some, whom he calls a generation of vipers, and who trusted in Abraham, instead of the God of Abraham. (Matt. iii. 7—11.) Are we to conclude from these examples, that none ought to be baptized, who do not give credible proof of viperism, and make a credible profession of faith in the Father of the faithful, as a Saviour? All the authority which a scripture example can possibly have, is, that you are warranted to give the ordinance to such characters as received it from the inspired servants of God. They baptized believers, and unbelievers, and a generation of vipers; and we may do the same. They baptized people, not because they were already virtuous, but with a view to make them

so, as will be proved at large ; and since they despaired of none, they rejected none.

Of the examples of baptism, faith is very seldom mentioned, and it is never required, except in one instance, Acts viii. 37, which text will be shown to be spurious. If one clear precedent could be produced of faith being required as a qualification, it might perhaps support the inference, that where the faith of the candidate is not expressed, it is to be understood ; but since no such instance can be given, we can only know that he had faith, by its being expressly asserted, or clearly implied.

The Samaritans, the Corinthians, and the jailer at Philippi, are the only examples where faith is connected with baptism. There are a few other cases, where the faith of the subjects may be inferred : but we shall not allow baptists the use of inference, so long as they deny us the same privilege.

On the other hand, there is not a word about the faith of the multitudes, whom John baptized ; and there is positive evidence that they were not believers, in the sense our brethren understand that term ; for John admits, that those who came to his baptism, were the vilest characters ; and he baptized them unto repentance, and for the remission of sins, which he could not have done, had they previously repented and obtained forgiveness. Could their faith be worth disputing about, when it had neither produced repentance, nor obtained pardon ?

The disciples of our Saviour were all baptized ; and they were so numerous, that it is said, all men came to him. (John iii. 26.) There is no mention of the faith of these candidates, or of any qualifications being required of them. To those who say, they might have faith, it is sufficient to reply, They might not. But we happen to know that many of these disciples never had faith ; for on one occasion, when many of them renounced the Lord, we are told, " He knew from the beginning, that they believed not." (John vi. 60—66.)

The baptism of the apostles was for the remission of sins, (Acts ii. 38,) and they could not give the ordinance with that view, if their subjects gave credible evidence of being justified by faith. There is no proof that the families of Lydia, the jailer, and Stephanus, were believers prior to baptism; but much to the contrary.

When faith is never made a condition of baptism, when there are but few examples of believers' baptism, and when there is positive and undeniable evidence of great multitudes having been baptized, who neither possessed nor professed faith, we have no authority to deny the ordinance to infants, merely because they are not believers. We, therefore, still insist upon it, that the want of a precept or precedent will as completely nullify the ordinance to a youth, or an aged person, as to an infant.

There is neither command nor example, for administering baptism on a profession of faith. We admit the fact, that a few believed and were baptized; and have no doubt but their faith operated on their own minds, as an inducement to receive the ordinance; but that the administrator required, or the candidate actually made, a profession of faith at the time the rite was given, there is not a jot of proof.

There is neither precept nor precedent for a person being subjected to christian instruction, so long as a single day prior to baptism; nor is there any evidence that the peculiarities of christianity were ever divulged to the uninitiated. It is generally conceded by pedit-baptists, that adults should not receive the ordinance before they have acquired a competent knowledge of the christian religion: hence in their missionary intelligence we find them, like the baptists, speaking of persons being under a course of instruction, preparatory to baptism. At Jerusalem, three thousand were baptized "the same day," and at Philippi the jailer and his family were baptized "the same hour of the night" on which they were informed of the messiahship of Jesus. These would not have been instructed in

the christian economy prior to their reception of the rite : there was not time for it.

There is neither precept nor example for administering christian baptism in public. Whether John the Baptist gave the ordinance in public, or in private, we are not informed ; and it is of no importance to inquire, because we shall show that his was not christian baptism. Several examples of the privacy of the rite will be given in another place.

There is neither command nor precedent for administering christian baptism in rivers, or in much water. The reason why John chose such places will be explained, when the mode comes under discussion.

There is neither command nor example for immersing people with their clothes on. If immersion be the mode, the only legal mode of administration, it cannot be an immaterial circumstance, whether the candidate be clothed or naked : it is a question of the utmost importance to morals, and particularly so when the publicity of the ordinance is contended for. All the religious immersions of the Jews were performed in a state of nudity. If our brethren, without any scripture warrant, think their practice justifiable on the ground of decency, they must allow us to urge the same plea. Now we think it indecent, though the thoughts of the parties may be quite pure, for a man to grasp a woman, especially when both are young, raise her off her feet, bend her body backward, and set her on her feet again, whether it be done in the water or out of it ; and if the man does not do all this, he does not baptize her. But whether the practice be justifiable on other grounds or not, we must not now stay to inquire : one thing is quite certain, that there is no authority whatever in the Bible for performing religious immersions with the body clothed.

On the supposition that there is neither precept nor precedent for infant baptism, our brethren insist upon it that infant baptism is unlawful. If the premises warrant the conclusion, everything must be unlawful in relation to positive institutions, for which you have

neither precept nor precedent; and then, as I have shown,—

1. It is unlawful to admit females to the Lord's table.

2. It is unlawful to baptize the children of christian parents when they are grown up.

3. It is unlawful to baptize a youth.

4. It is unlawful to baptize an aged person.

5. It is unlawful to give baptism on a profession of faith.

6. It is unlawful to baptize a person who has been well instructed in christianity.

7. It is unlawful to administer christian baptism in public.

8. It is unlawful for christians to baptize in rivers, or in much water.

9. It is unlawful to dip people with their clothes on.

A strict adherence to precept and precedent cannot be more fatal to pedobaptism, than to the practice of our brethren.

But does it follow that there is neither precept nor precedent for infant baptism, because the word infant is never connected with the ordinance? A youth or an old man is never mentioned in connexion with the ordinance, and yet no one doubts but both are clearly included in the commands, and in some of the examples; and we shall prove that infants are as much included as persons of any other age.

We read of the baptism of "men and women;" and our brethren say, that men and women of all ages are equally eligible. And we read of the baptism of whole families of children, and we insist upon it, that children of all ages are equally eligible. There is only one person's age stated at the time of receiving the ordinance. When our Saviour was baptized, he "began to be about thirty years of age." (Luke iii. 23.) This being the case, if you want to deny the ordinance to any one, you have only to say, that he has no right to it, except he can produce a precept or example of a person of the same age having received it; and if he

should not happen to be thirty, he is fast enough. If you wish to baptize an infant, a baptist demands, whether you can find in the New Testament, a puling baby of a few weeks or months old, a subject of the ordinance. You are obliged to answer, No. If he be going to baptize a person, no matter whether he be ten, twenty, forty, fifty, or eighty, you may question him as to whether he can find the age of his candidate, among the scripture subjects; and, in his turn, he must answer, No.

The fact is, the age of the subject is a matter of no consequence at all, or the New Testament would have said something upon it. The only question is, Who are fit subjects? And that question can only be answered, by considering the principles upon which the ordinance is administered, the rank it holds in the christian economy, and the ends to be served by it. The result of this inquiry will be a full establishment of the eligibility of little ones.

If any qualifications were required of which infants are incapable, they might perhaps be rejected; but, after the most serious and careful examination, I can find no such qualifications. The scriptures are very explicit upon all subjects where moral and spiritual qualities are deemed necessary. Repentance and conversion are necessary in order to forgiveness. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts iii. 19.) Faith is necessary to obtain spiritual life. "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." (John iii. 36.) Holiness is necessary as a preparation for heaven. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.) If these qualifications were necessary to entitle a person to baptism, we might expect to find some such texts as the following: Repent and be converted, that ye may be baptized; he that believeth not, shall not be baptized; without holiness, no man shall be baptized. But nothing of this sort is to be met with in the Bible. "The Corinthians believed and were baptized." And "Saul arose and

was baptized." The rising of Saul from a prostrate posture is connected with his baptism, exactly in the same manner as the faith of the Corinthians is connected with theirs; if faith, therefore, be a necessary preliminary to baptism, because the Corinthians believed and were baptized, it will equally follow, that every candidate must be prostrate when the administrator is introduced to him, and, at the word of command, must arise to receive the rite, because Saul arose and was baptized.

The objection of our brethren founded upon the want of the word infant, among the precepts and precedents, is a mere quibble: you may raise just as much dust against the baptism of a person in any other stage of life, except he be about thirty, since no other age is ever connected with the ordinance; and you will be just as much puzzled to find the word youth, adult, young man, or old man, as the word infant. The situation which the ordinance holds, the reasons for which it is given, and the numerous examples of whole families who received it, all serve to show, not only the lawfulness of giving the rite to the infants of christian parents, but also the unlawfulness of protracting it till they come to years of maturity, and are in possession of the power of godliness.

All the evidence relating to baptism, is not included in the precepts and precedents. We read of the doctrine of baptisms; (Heb. vi. 2;) and there is much said upon the subject, both doctrinally and incidentally, which cannot be reduced to either of the above heads. Is the large and important portion of evidence drawn from other scriptural sources to go for nothing? Is there either precept or precedent for this kind of procedure?

Jesus Christ studiously avoided the communication of his peculiar doctrines to those who were not disciples. (Matt. xiii. 10, 13; Mark iv. 11, 12, 34.) His conduct in this particular ought to have the weight of a command with us; for it is our duty to tread in his steps; and we sin against him when we

make that knowledge a qualification for discipleship, which he imparted to none but actual disciples. If the children of christian parents, therefore, are not to be recognised as disciples, they ought not to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; in direct contradiction to the plain command of the apostle. (Ephes. vi. 4.)

Objection. "But to make a disciple, and to baptize him are two distinct things." (John iv. 1.) It is not necessary to my argument to controvert this position. Suppose then, as the baptist does, that disciples are not made by baptism; will any one venture to assert, that a disciple is not entitled to baptism? What did Jesus do with the disciples which he made? The text says, he baptized them. And if we are to apply the baptists' distinction, as they do, to Matthew xxviii. 19, he commanded the apostles to baptize them. What then is gained by the distinction which has often been contended for so warmly? If the children of christian parents are disciples, we have the example and command of Christ for their baptism; if they are not disciples, we have the authority of Christ for denying them a christian education. A baptist must admit one of these conclusions, if the former, the controversy is at an end; if the latter, they contradict nature, and an important apostolic precept.

We do not contend for the baptism of infants, because they are infants, but because they are proper subjects of religious instruction. I have just seen a pamphlet by Mr. Birt, entitled, "Adult Baptism Maintained," etc. The word adult, is no more to be found in scripture, in connexion with baptism, than the word infant. Mr. Birt does not baptize a candidate I presume, because he happens to be an adult; for in that case he might as well give the ordinance to an idiot as to a philosopher; but because he is a believer. If the candidate make a credible profession of faith, Mr. B. would not, I dare say, reject him on account of his age, whether he were old or young. Suppose he were a child of twelve, or an old man of eighty, Mr. B.

would insist that the age of the party is immaterial, his being a believer constitutes him a proper subject of the ordinance ; and on this ground, Mr. B. would contend that all the scripture evidence in favour of the baptism of believers, will apply to this particular case.

If the baptist then be obliged to fly from the age of the candidate to his qualifications, he can have no right to object to our subjects on the ground of their age. If we can prove that they possess a scripture fitness for the ordinance, we give it them on account of that fitness, and not on account of their being young or old. Religious instruction is by the practice and command of Christ, and the practice of the apostles, placed after baptism ; and no instance to the contrary can be produced ; all, therefore, who are entitled to this instruction, must have a previous right to baptism. Suppose application made to me to instruct an old man. In conformity with scripture precepts and precedents, I shall baptize him first. I do not give him the ordinance, because he is an old man, but because he is about to learn the doctrine of Christ. It is exactly the same, if the person I am desired to instruct be a little child ; the age signifies nothing : it is about to enter upon its religious education, and is, therefore, entitled to baptism ; it is not baptized because it is an infant, but because it is entering into the school of Christ, in order to be made wise unto salvation. You cannot dispute their right to baptism, without disputing their right to christian knowledge.

“ But a child a month or two old is not capable of receiving religious instruction.” Then, if you please, defer the ordinance till it be capable. A baptist, I presume, will grant that the religious education of a child should commence by it is two or three years old ; and the difference of two or three years is not worth disputing about.

If children could but believe, Mr. Booth admits that they might be baptized. It will be proved at large, in a subsequent chapter, that in the examples of believers' baptism, the faith of the candidates related

merely to the messiahship of Jesus. I baptized a child a few weeks ago, aged two years, seven months, and ten days, who professed to believe in Christ, and to love him. I could not doubt the sincerity of this infant; and I feel persuaded that its knowledge of the Redeemer was not inferior to that of Simon Magus; and I am quite sure that the state of its heart was infinitely superior. On the ground of believers' baptism, therefore, we can justify the baptism of infants; not as infants, but as believers.

We are often reminded by our friends, that though we read expressly of the baptism of men and women, we nowhere read of the baptism of children. They infer from this, that since infants are not named, they are not eligible to receive the ordinance. But if the inference be good for anything, it will equally exclude all children of every age short of manhood. Here I am somewhat perplexed, in attempting to reconcile the statements of the baptists respecting adult and believers' baptism. Sometimes we are told, the age of a candidate is of no consequence, provided he be but a believer. At other times, adults are spoken of as the only proper subjects, because we read of the baptism of men and women, but never of children. The two statements would be reconciled, if it could be made out, that young people are incapable of believing before they arrive at manhood; but this, I rather think, will not be attempted.

Dr. Ryland has given two instances, which will be noticed more at large afterwards, of boys receiving the ordinance among the baptists, one aged eleven years, the other twelve. These will not be called men. If it be true, therefore, that none but men and women ought to be baptized, because the scripture subjects had attained to maturity, and a total silence is observed respecting children, it must be as unlawful to give the rite to children of eleven or twelve years old, as to those whose age is only as many months or days. I wish to know why we are to be restricted to adult subjects, when our brethren receive children?

Will not the want of a precept or precedent disqualify their children as well as ours? Why do they impose a rule upon us, which they will not be governed by themselves?

With respect to the mode: "I would take the liberty of proposing to my baptist friends a plain case; not so much a case of conscience as a case of criticism. That on which this case is founded, is as follows: it is well known that under the present dispensation, there are two instituted ordinances; the one in scripture is expressed by the term *deipnon*, 'a supper,' the other by *baptisma*, 'baptism.' The proper and obvious meaning of *deipnon*, is 'a feast or a common meal.' (Mark vi. 21; John xxi. 22.) The proper meaning of *baptisma* is said to be 'the immersion of the whole body.' The case then is this:—

"If, because the proper meaning of the term *baptisma*, 'baptism,' is the immersion of the whole body, a person, who is not immersed, cannot be said to have been baptized, since nothing short of immersion, amounts to the full import of the word baptism: if this be true, I should be glad to know that as *deipnon* 'a supper,' properly means 'a feast or a common meal,' whether a person who, in the use of that ordinance, takes only a piece of bread of half an inch square, and drinks a table spoonful of wine, which is neither a feast nor a common meal, and so does not come up to the proper meaning of the word, can be said to have received the Lord's supper?"*

After the above was written, and just before these sheets were put to press, I met with a little piece entitled, "Infant Sprinkling no Baptism;" in which the author undertakes to show, in opposition to Mr. Edwards, that the New Testament does contain examples of female communion. This pamphlet excited my curiosity, as it has always appeared to me impossible to produce either a precept, or precedent in support of the privilege of baptist ladies; and yet till this

* Edwards's Candid Reasons, p. 154.

be done, nearly all the arguments against infant baptism, must fall to the ground.

I was not much surprised to find, on entering on the perusal, that the author had lost his temper. When we have a very harrassing, perplexing piece of business to perform, we are not always in the best humour. But to come to the point.

"With respect to female communion," says our author, (page 11,) "it is needless to enumerate many passages of scripture." He has referred to the following: 1 Cor. xi. 1—17, 34; xiv. 23, 24; Acts i. 14; ii. 41, 42; iv. 32; v. 14; viii. 12; xvi. 14, 15; Rom. xvi. 1, 13; Ephes. v. 22: and when the reader has examined them carefully, if he can perceive that females are once mentioned or referred to in connexion with the Lord's supper, I must congratulate him on his superior sagacity. It was indeed perfectly needless to enumerate any more, if none could be found more to the purpose.

In the 1st Corinthians xi., women are mentioned in the former part of the chapter, and the Lord's supper in the latter part; but when they are noticed, it is in reference to praying and prophesying; as soon as the subject is changed to the eucharist, the females are lost sight of. Suppose we were to appeal to a chapter where infants are spoken of in one part, and baptism in another; and it should turn out on examination, that infants are mentioned in relation to another point, but are dropped the moment the subject of baptism is introduced; I appeal to a baptist, whether he would not consider this circumstance as supplying an argument against infant baptism, rather than for it?

Mr. Booth spoke of an express warrant for female communion. I believe the present writer was conscious there is no such thing; and hence his tone is considerably lowered: he will admit, he says, of an approved example. But when he comes to produce his examples, they only prove the church fellowship of women. He seems to be quite sensible of this, and therefore remarks, (page 11,) "Indeed, were we to

prove that females were baptized, and that they composed parts of christian societies, we should, in fact, prove female communion." And so every example of female church membership is an approved example of female communion! What a pity it is that a writer who is so easily persuaded respecting the rights of women, should be so hard to convince as to the claims of children!

I was in hopes of making an easy conquest of this gentleman to the cause of infant baptism, when I saw the slender evidence which satisfied him in behalf of the ladies, till I was astounded with the following challenge, page 22: "The *onus* does not lie with us to prove there were no children baptized by New Testament authority. To this we challenge them. It has not yet been done. When it is done by clear and explicit precepts or precedents produced from the scriptures, we will implicitly submit."

My nerves were so shook with the martial air of this defiance, that I believe I should not have ventured to take up the gauntlet, but for the promise of submission with which it concludes. I must first, however, attend to the conditions of this promise. My precepts or precedents, I perceive, must be clear and explicit. In another place he says, "An approved example is equivalent to a divine command." One approved example, I conceived, when I read this, would have been sufficient; but the challenge requires a plurality; I will therefore endeavour to produce precedents. An approved example was thought sufficient for female communion; but clear and explicit precedents must be produced for the baptism of children. I would not willingly misunderstand our champion: if my examples be only as clear and explicit as his, I presume they will be approved. But his examples are only clear and explicit in favour of female church membership; and female communion is no more than an inference drawn from their membership. I shall proceed exactly in the same way.

Now to the combat. One of his approved examples

is taken from Ephesians, v. 22, where he remarks : " The female members of the church at Ephesus, are exhorted to obey their husbands." My first example shall be taken from the same epistle, (chap. vi. 1,) where children are exhorted to obey their parents. Now if women being exhorted in an epistle to a church, be a proof of their membership, then since children are exhorted in the very same epistle, they must be members also. My next example shall be taken from Colossians iii. 20 : " Children obey your parents in all things." Here again children are clearly and expressly addressed as members of a christian church.

The inference is the next subject to be contested. The baptist comes to his inference thus: the Lord's supper is an ordinance for the members of the church; women are members of the church; therefore women are entitled to the Lord's supper. I come to my inference thus : baptism is the rite of initiation into the church: children were members of apostolic churches; therefore children received apostolic baptism. I could easily prove my first proposition from scripture; but I need not; because it is not only admitted, but contended for, by the baptists. My second proposition is proved by the texts above cited, where the children are expressly named, and addressed as members of the churches in common with their parents. The inference is indisputable.

Now, sir, surrender at discretion; or I shall give you no quarter. If, however, you "will implicitly submit," I will set you at liberty on your parole of honour, never to serve again in these wars against our children as long as you live.

CHAPTER II.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

OUR baptist brethren lay much stress upon the force of the term *baptizo*, "baptize." Mr. Booth has pro-

duced a great number of authorities to show that the word means to dip, immerse, plunge. And most writers on the same side, since the appearance of his bulky volumes, have copied largely from him, as though the word had no other meaning. They seem to have lost sight of Mr. B.'s admission, that most of his authorities explain baptism to denote pouring and sprinkling, as well as immersion.

The only important point of inquiry is, In what sense do the writers of the New Testament use the word? If they use it for immersion, and immersion only, then our brethren are right, and we are wrong. But if they use it for sprinkling and pouring, our practice is justified; and it matters not a rush how many more meanings other writers attach to it. To the law, then, and to the testimony.

The pharisee who invited our Lord to dine, marvelled that he had not first washed (*ebaptisthe*, "baptized") before dinner. (Luke xi. 38.) "And when they (the pharisees) come from the market, except they wash (*baptisontai*, 'baptize') they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing (*baptismous*, 'the baptisms') of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." (Mark vii. 4.)

Some baptists have supposed that the washing on return from the market, was an immersion of the whole body. But this is very improbable; especially as the washing is attributed to all the Jews, as well as to the pharisees. (Mark vii. 3.) The pharisees might possibly carry their superstition so far; but many of the Jews, the sadducees in particular, were not likely to run into such an extreme.

Our Lord had not been to market, nor was he of the sect of the pharisees; and yet his host marvelled that he had not baptized before dinner. No one ever supposed it was so customary with the Jews generally to plunge the whole body in water every day before dinner, as to excite astonishment when the ceremony was omitted. These baptisms,

therefore, could be nothing more than a washing of the hands.

But it will be said, the hands were immersed. Well; and what then? Here is a national custom of baptizing every day before dinner; and this baptism amounted to no more than washing the hands! As the Jews were in the daily habit of restricting baptism to the hands, how could they possibly infer from the mere use of the word by our Lord, that he required them to plunge the whole body?

There are other ways of washing the hands than by dipping. The Jewish custom was to pour water on the hands. I infer this from 2 Kings iii. 11: "Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah." The reference here cannot be to a particular instance, but to a custom. When Elisha is said to have poured water on the hands of Elijah, the idea conveyed by it is, that Elisha was the servant of Elijah, because servants washed the hands of their masters. As a particular mode of doing a certain piece of service is here used, to denote the relation of a servant, that mode must have been the customary one, especially as the phrase appears to have been proverbial.

If it be thought that the custom might be changed before the days of our Lord, I answer, we have no right to assume it was, without evidence. If there be evidence of the change, let it be produced; till then, here is proof of baptism by pouring. This is the custom in Persia at the present day, as Sir R. Ker Porter, in his travels, just published, has remarked. He was at an entertainment given by the prime minister. "A silver-plated jug," says he, "with a long spout, accompanied by a basin of the same metal, was carried round to every guest, by an attendant who poured water from the jug on our right hands, which we held in succession over

the basin.”* In the villages in this country it is common to wash the hands by pumping water upon them; and in the towns it is not unusual to let the water fall upon the hands from a cock.

Different modes would be used in the baptism of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables. The cups and pots were, perhaps, dipped in water. The vessels of brass were undoubtedly used for culinary purposes: and how these vessels were baptized, a servant girl can give better information than a learned divine. I have just interrogated my servant upon this knotty subject. How do you wash your brass pans? I pour water into them. Do you never dip them in water? No; never. As to the tables, whether we take the term literally, or suppose, as some do, that the couches are intended on which they sat or reclined at their meals,—dipping is out of the question: they were not put into the water, but the water was applied to them, either by pouring, or by sprinkling, or, which is more probable, by a wet cloth. What then becomes of the bold assertion, that baptism always denotes immersion?

In Hebrews ix. 10, we are informed that the Jewish service consisted in “meats and drinks, and divers washings (*baptismoî*, ‘baptisms’) and carnal ordinances.” The apostle here, without doubt, refers to the various ablutions among the Jews; and these were performed generally by sprinkling. Two of these divers baptisms are mentioned in verses 12 and 13. The first was “by the blood of goats, and calves;” and this was administered, as we all know, by sprinkling. The second was by “the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean.” Let those who contend for immersion as the only mode, explain to us the divers Jewish baptisms performed in that way.

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all

* Travels in Georgia, Persia, etc., vol. i., pp. 238, 239.

baptized (*ebaptisanto*) unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Cor. x. 1, 2.)

By the cloud here is certainly meant, the pillar of the cloud which accompanied the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to Canaan ; because it is expressly mentioned by Moses in his account of their passage through the sea. (Exod. xiv. 19—24.) This cloud was a covering to them in the day, to protect them from the scorching rays of the sun. "Egypt was glad when they departed ; for the fear of them fell upon them. He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light in the night." (Psalm cv. 38, 39.) It is probable that this cloud supplied aqueous particles to cool the burning atmosphere, and occasionally a refreshing shower. "Some are of opinion," says Mac-knight, "that in those parts of the wilderness where the streams from the rock could not follow the Israelites, they received rain for drink by showers from the clouds ; and to this they apply Psalm lxxviii. 9 : "Thou, O Lord, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary." The preceding verses show that this refers to their "march through the wilderness." This explains how they were baptized by the cloud : by its copious dew, or rain, which sprinkled them.

How were they baptized in, or by the sea ? Not by immersion most certainly ; for we read expressly, that "the Lord caused the sea to go back, by a strong east wind, all that night, and made the sea dry land ; and the waters were divided ; and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea, upon the dry ground ; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." As the action of a natural agent, the wind was employed to make a passage for them, the extreme agitation of the waters by it would occasion a mist or spray ; by this, as they passed along, they would be sprinkled ; and this, I presume, is what the apostle means when he says, they were baptized in or by the sea.

But if our baptist brethren be dissatisfied with this

explanation, it is impossible to make the history bend to their views: the Israelites could not be dipped, plunged, or overwhelmed in the sea, if the statement be true, that they went through it on dry ground. Here is another indisputable proof that baptism cannot mean immersion only.

Our baptist friends evidently find some difficulty in disposing of so many examples of baptism without immersion. They, therefore, remind us that none of these are examples of christian baptism; that there is no administrator, no profession of faith, no one point of agreement between the baptisms under the law and those under the gospel, except in the use of water. They conclude that Christ did not borrow his baptism from any baptisms in use among the Jews; but that his is an entirely new institution, which is to be found in Matthew xxviii. 19; and this they call the great enacting law of christian baptism. The terms of this law they insist upon it are to be taken in their strict and most proper sense; and as the lexicographers say, that to baptize is to dip, plunge, immerse, this is the only legal way of administering the ordinance. But then these same lexicographers say, the word also denotes pouring or sprinkling. For this they are rather roughly handled; because dipping, pouring, and sprinkling, are three different actions, which diversity, it is taken for granted, no divine law can warrant.*

A few remarks will be necessary here. The practice of a people is the best exposition which can be given, as to their ideas of words. Now we know that the Jews in the days of Christ, understood baptism to denote pouring and sprinkling, because they expressed their pourings and sprinklings, as we have seen, by that term. Jesus Christ too, could not be ignorant of their ideas upon this subject. But in his law, he has given no new explanation of the term, and therefore could not expect his subjects to understand it in a new sense. It is a matter of no importance whatever, to

* Booth's Pedobaptism. Vol. i., ch 4., pp. 229 — 231.

ascertain what may be the strict and proper meaning of a word which is in current use among a people, if we do but know the meaning they affix to it. No legislator in his sober senses, would put a term into a law which was in current use among his people, and expect them to understand it in a new sense, when the law was entirely silent upon this new sense. Now no one pretends that Jesus Christ has given any explanation of the word baptism; and it necessarily follows, that his disciples would understand the term in exactly the same sense in which they had been accustomed to use it. If our baptist brethren can prove that the Jews sometimes baptized by immersion, it will then follow, that they had three ways of baptizing, namely, by sprinkling, pouring, and dipping; and as the christian law does not say a word about the mode, it would be lawful for them, when they became christians, to baptize by any of these modes.

The baptists argue as though it were in the nature of laws to limit any act enjoined to one particular mode of doing it. Now I think the direct contrary. Suppose there are three customary modes of bathing in a warm country. Some people prefer the shower bath, some choose to have pails full of water poured upon them, and others feel most pleasure in plunging into the water. As the practice is salutary, let us suppose, with the view of promoting health and cleanliness, that a law is made requiring all persons who are able to bear it, to bathe at certain fixed times. It must be obvious in this case, that, if the law said nothing about any particular mode, the people would follow their own humour as to that point. And why should they not? Would it not be ridiculous in a legislator to fix the mode, for no other reason than to prevent a diversity of action in obeying the law? If the people were sufficiently bathed, the intention of the law would be answered: and it could be a matter of no moment how they performed the ceremony, whether they used a shower-bath, or a pail, or walked into the water, or plunged in head foremost.

Let us suppose further, that some hundreds of years after the passing of the law, a dispute should arise as to how these people performed the ceremony of bathing in obedience to it. Lexicographers are consulted as to the meaning of the term; and they say, it signifies to wash in a bath. Old authors, who wrote in other countries near the time this law was made, are ransacked; and it is shown that they speak of persons bathing, as going under the water in a bath; and there is no evidence that they used either the shower bath or the pail. The history of the people who were first subject to this law is carefully examined, to find out, if possible, how they obeyed the law. Here the advocates for washing in a bath, can find little to strengthen their opinion. They discover, however, that a short time before the law passed, there were many of the people bathed in a bath; and they, therefore, conclude that they must have been washed all over in the bath, though the record does not state this circumstance. This is the strength of the argument on one side. The abettors of the shower bath and the pail also appeal to the lexicographers in proof that their mode is included in the word bathe. They can also produce ancient authors for their practice. And as to the people said to be in the bath, they reply, that there is no intimation of their being washed all over; that at, would be a better rendering than in; the pail might therefore be used; and that the word bath, probably denoted a shower bath. Now I should think it must be manifest to every reflecting person, that the chief points of inquiry should be, how the people were accustomed to bathe before the law passed; whether the law fixed one particular mode; and whether their subsequent practice was confined to one mode.

As it respects baptism, it has been shown that the Jews baptized by sprinkling and pouring, and I will grant, if you please, by immersion also, before Jesus Christ published his law; Jesus Christ who enacted the law, and the apostles who at first executed it, were all Jews; neither the law itself, nor the subsequent

practice of the apostles, gives the least indication that one mode was to be used to the exclusion of the rest ; and without some restrictive authority, we may be sure the same modes would be legal, and would probably be practised under the law, which were used prior to it. All that is said about lexicographers and Greek writers, is quite beside the question ; as is also the perpetual declamation of Mr. Booth against any diversity of action in the administration of the ordinance. If an act be only executed in such a way as to answer all the purposes which the legislator intended by it, what can it possibly signify, though twenty men have twenty different ways of going about it ?

If Jesus Christ had indeed fixed how baptism should be performed, then all variety of modes are done away with ; but we positively deny that there is a particle of evidence to this effect in the New Testament. That the word baptize itself did not, and could not, restrict the actions to immersion, in the esteem of the Jews, who were the first people that were brought under the law of baptism, is certain from the plain fact, that they had been accustomed to baptize by the action of sprinkling and pouring.

When our baptist brethren, therefore, try to restrict us to the use of one mode only, by such observations as the following, we can only smile at the attempt. Suppose an Israelite in keeping the passover, had sprinkled the blood upon the floor instead of the door-post, had boiled the lamb instead of roasting it, had eaten it with sweet herbs instead of bitter, he would not have kept the Lord's passover, but a rite of his own.

We grant this is all quite true. But let us suppose the door-posts had not been mentioned ; it would then, I imagine, have been quite as proper to sprinkle the ground as the door-posts. Had the command been merely to eat the lamb, without a word about roasting, any more than boiling, I presume either method of preparation would have been legal. If the command had respected herbs generally, without stating any

particular quality, it cannot be doubted that it would have been quite as lawful to eat sweet herbs as bitter. Now we contend, that we are not tied to any particular mode in baptism; and are, therefore, at liberty to use that, which, all things considered, we deem most eligible. But if only one mode were lawful, it would be impossible, I think, to prefer any exclusive claims in favour of immersion.

But the evidence, it is said, arising from the practice of the apostles, all goes to support the dipping mode. When, however, this vaunted evidence is produced, nearly the whole of it is brought from the practice of John the Baptist, which was prior to the law of Christ. This blunder runs through Mr. Booth's book. He is perpetually reminding us, that christian baptism being a positive institute of Christ, we are to pay no regard, in the administration of it, to any modes of purification previously in use; that the law of Christ is to be our only rule; and that this law is so precise as to admit of only one mode. But when he produces his evidence in favour of immersion, he refers to John the Baptist baptizing in Jordan and in Enon. This matter must be sifted.

If Jesus Christ did not borrow his rite from any preceding baptisms practised among the Jews, he did not borrow it from John, who was a Jew; and if the mode is to be determined by the law of Christ solely, then the mode used by John is of no more authority than the mode used by the Jewish priests in administering the divers baptisms prescribed by the law of Moses.

To this we can feel no serious objection. Now how will a baptist prove that the christian baptism was by immersion? By his own rule, he is cut off from Jordan and Enon; and where will he find either a river or much water in which christian baptism was performed? He is now in a dry and thirsty land! To get rid of the Jewish baptisms by sprinkling, he is obliged to adopt principles, which destroy the authority of John as an example.

O! but the baptism of John was from heaven! Yes; and so were the divers baptisms (Heb. ix. 10) used in the Jewish worship. We have as much reason, therefore, on this ground, to suppose that our Lord borrowed the mode from Moses as from John.

But our Lord was baptized of John, as an example to all his followers; and, therefore, the baptism of John is obligatory on christians. Indeed! Then I answer, he was circumcised according to the law of Moses, as an example to all his followers; and, therefore, circumcision, according to the law of Moses, is obligatory on all christians. There is just as much said in the New Testament in proof of his circumcision being exemplary, as of his baptism being so. Besides, if Jesus Christ borrowed his baptism from John, then John might take his from the Jewish service; from which it will follow, that since the Jewish baptisms were by sprinkling, the baptisms of John and of Christ were performed in the same way.

We find, however, that the baptism of John was quite distinct from that of Christ, because the same persons received both. "Paul came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts xix. 1—5.)

Now there is no notice at all of the first of these baptisms being imperfect, as the reason of the administration of the second. The persons were not infants, and there is no complaint that they had been

only sprinkled. The apostle supposed they had received christian baptism; and as this, according to the commission, was administered in the name of the Holy Spirit, he might well feel surprised at their ignorance of him, and inquire, Unto what then were ye baptized? They explained the difficulty, by saying, they had only received the baptism of John; for we have no mention in the New Testament of John baptizing in the name of the Holy Spirit. The apostle found no fault with their former baptism; but informed them John taught his disciples that they must believe in the Messiah, as soon as he should be manifested; and when they learned from the report of the apostle, that the Messiah had come and accomplished his mission on earth, they received the christian rite.

This remarkable passage affords incontrovertible proof of the baptism of John being quite distinct from that of Christ; and of the obligation which the disciples of the Baptist were under to receive the ordinance again, on their becoming christians. This appears very evident, not only from the fact that these Ephesians received both baptisms; but from what the apostle states the Baptist taught those who received the ordinance at his hands. "He said unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." It is certain from these words, that those whom John baptized, did not and could not profess faith in Jesus at the time they received his rite; because the Saviour was not yet manifested; nor was he personally known to the Baptist. (John i. 31.) He baptized them and taught them that some time afterwards, they must believe in the person of the Messiah; namely, when he should appear among them. The words, "That is, on Christ Jesus," were not used by John, but are added, as explanatory, by the apostle. John could not possibly baptize his disciples in the name of Jesus, because he has told us himself, that at the time he gave them the ordinance, he knew him not. Should

it be said that, since John's baptism laid people under an obligation to believe in Christ, those who received it would not have been baptized again, had there been no irregularity in the first administration; we answer, 1. That this is not only talking without book, but against the book; since no irregularity is marked in the account. 2. That if an obligation to believe be a sufficient warrant for christian baptism, then all in the whole world who hear of Christ ought to be baptized, whether they believe or not; because they are certainly under an obligation to believe in him. Or if persons are brought under an obligation by the rite to believe in Christ at a future time, we need not desire a better reason for infant baptism.

This passage contains four substantial reasons why we are to believe the baptism of John was quite distinct from that of Christ. 1. John did not administer in the name of the Holy Ghost; or it would have been no explanation of the ignorance of these people upon the subject, that they had only received his rite. 2. John did not baptize in the name of Jesus; because he knew him not, and because the apostle baptized his disciples in this name. 3. It is essential to christian baptism according to the commission of Christ, that it be administered in the name of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as well as in the name of the Father. 4. The important fact, that those who had received the ordinance of John, afterwards received that of Christ.

If then we are to look for the mode in the law of Christ, and not in any preceding baptisms, we are clearly cut off from making any use of John's baptism. The word in the law does not and cannot limit the mode to immersion. It only remains, therefore, to inquire, whether the practice of the apostles, when acting under the commission of Christ, settles the question in favour of the baptists' mode. This narrows the inquiry considerably.

There is only one example of a person baptized under the commission of Christ, who is said to have been in the water; and this was the eunuch. (Acts

viii. 38, 39.) The whole stress of the argument here depends upon the Greek particles, rendered into, and out of. It will be shown by and by, they might just as well be rendered to and from; and then there is no evidence of their being in the water at all. But granting they were in the water, there is no proof of entire immersion. The Israelites, according to the apostle, were baptized in the sea; and yet no one pretends they were immersed in it. "Jesus went up into a mountain." (Matt. v. 1.) Quere: Did the mountain cover him?

Besides, here is no intimation that there was sufficient water for the purpose of immersion. The part of the country over which the eunuch was travelling was a desert; (Acts viii. 26;) and it is a rare circumstance to find water in a desert, in those warm countries. The eunuch was evidently surprised at the discovery on this occasion. "*See here is water.*" The words, *here is*, are in italics in our translation, and have nothing answering to them in the original. Leave them out, and the passage will read thus: "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, *See!—Water!*—What doth hinder me to be baptized?" The address is abrupt, and the words disjointed; which clearly indicate the astonishment of the speaker. It is not probable there was much water, because they came unto it, before they saw it. The miracles of grace effected by the gospel, are represented under the figure of miracles in nature; and among these the prophet mentions springs and streams breaking forth in the wilderness and in the desert. (Isaiah xxxv. 6.) In this country, a traveller scarcely ever speaks of meeting with water, unless it be a river, a flood, or a lake: but we blunder most egregiously when we transfer these ideas to the mention of water in an eastern desert. The fact is, water is so scarce an article in warm countries, especially in deserts, that we scarcely ever read a book of travels into such parts, in which the discovery of a spring, not ancle deep, is not noticed

with wonder and delight. If the water in question were a well, two strangers, unless they had lost their senses, would not have ventured into it; there is no indication that it was a river; and if the district had been well watered, it would not have been a desert. All the evidence, therefore, stands opposed to the supposition of this being a collection of water, sufficient and suitable for baptism by immersion.

It deserves to be noticed too, that there was no previous appointment respecting the administration of the ordinance in this place. This was the first water they saw, after the eunuch had heard of Jesus; and the sight of it suggested to him the thought of being baptized. With respect to John, he chose a river and much water, as the most suitable places for baptizing. There was, however, no choosing at all in this case. But if christian baptism was really performed by immersion; and if, on this account, christian ministers made choice of similar situations; how happens it that we never read of a river, or much water, in connexion with their administrations? During the ministry of Christ, his disciples baptized more persons than John; and after this we are informed of the baptism of many thousands; but not one of all these christians, that we read of, was baptized in a river, or in much water. There is, then, only one solitary instance produced, in which it is pretended the person was in the water; and if we admit the fact, there is no proof of immersion, but much to the contrary.

But suppose we admit this one person was dipped, how does this establish one mode exclusively? why just as well, as seeing one man wash his hands at a pump, proves the universal practice of the nation.

Another proof urged by our baptist friends of christian baptism by immersion, is a supposed allusion to this mode in Romans vi. 4, and Colossians ii. 12, where we are said to be buried with Christ by baptism.

If the design of the apostle in these texts were at-

tended to, the proof of allusion to the mode would be very scanty. What is said respecting baptism in Romans vi. is in answer to the question, verse 1, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" The answer is, "God forbid! How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein." And the proof is contained in the following verses, in which he shows how this death unto sin is brought about by baptism. 1. They "were baptized into Jesus Christ;" and by virtue of this union, with him, are represented as dying and rising with him, and walking in newness of life. Hence, 2. They "were baptized into his death." And 3. were "buried with him by baptism." The apostle here refers to the death and burial of sin; he, therefore, exhorts his friends, "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The point then is, whether there be any allusion to the mode of baptism in any of these representations. The first particular,—our being brought into union with Christ by baptism,—cannot be represented by immersion, or any other mode.

Let us try the second. We are "baptized unto his death." Here is allusion to our dying unto sin. Christ died by crucifixion; and so does our sin: hence the apostle says in verse 6, "Our old man is crucified with him." Is there reference to any mode of baptism in crucifixion? Yes, may those say, who use the sign of the cross in baptism;—Yes, the application of water in the form of a cross, is a striking figure of the crucifixion of Christ, and of sin.

We have another allusion here; for the state of death into which we are said in verse 3, to be brought by baptism, is, in verse 5, attributed to planting. "Baptized into his death—Planted together in the likeness of his death." By baptism, therefore, we are planted into his death. What is planted, is partly covered in the earth, and partly out of it. Some render this word grafted; but this amounts to the same thing; for only a part of the scion is inserted in

the stock and covered. In this figure, may not the apostle allude to a very ancient mode of baptism? Some of the oldest descriptions we have of the ordinance, represent the candidate as being partly in and partly out of the water. He is in the water up to about his knees, and the rest of his body out of it, with the administrator beside him, pouring water upon his head. Had this mode been practised in the present day, what an argument in favour of it might its supporters have drawn from the above figure!

The admirers of this mode might strengthen their argument by a passage from the apostle Peter. "In the ark, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us." (1 Peter iii. 20, 21.) Here the salvation effected by means of baptism, is expressly called a figure of the salvation of Noah and his family, by the ark in the water. Only the lower part of the ark was in the water, the upper part being out of it. Here is a complete type of the ancient mode.

The third representation is that of a burial. It cannot be denied that immersion would correspond very well to this figure. If, therefore, we are to infer the allusion from the resemblance between the figure and the mode, it must be granted the apostle here alludes to immersion. But then upon exactly the same principle we have proved, that the application of water in the form of a cross must be the mode; for no one can dispute but there is as striking a resemblance between this and crucifixion, as between immersion and a burial. Besides, the similitude in this particular, it may be urged, is expressed in the text; which is more than can be said for the baptists' mode. "Baptized into his death—Planted," by baptism, "in the likeness of his death." The same principle will equally serve to show that partial immersion must be the mode; for what can be more expressive than this, as a representation of planting?

If the evidence in favour of dipping be supposed to preponderate, because the apostle uses the figure of a

burial twice; it may be replied, that the advocates for partial immersion, have two different figures agreeing with their mode, and one of them is expressed as a figure of baptism. These figures are planting, and the ark on the water. Two different figures agreeing with the same mode, must be better evidence than the use of one figure twice. Besides, the patrons of partial immersion have two witnesses, Paul and Peter, while the advocates for dipping, have Paul only; and though this apostle repeats his testimony, yet all must allow, that in any court of judicature, the testimony of two good independent witnesses, must have more weight than the repeated testimony of only one of them.

Now what are we to do in this case? The principle of arguing adopted by the baptists, will just as well prove the mode to be the sign of the cross, or partial immersion, as plunging. Are we then to conclude that any one of these modes will do? that some of the Romans were baptized in one way, and some in another; and that the apostle here refers to them all? To this the baptists will not assent. And yet if one mode only is supposed to be alluded to, we must take that which has most proof in its favour; and the strongest evidence it appears, is in support of partial immersion.

If a resemblance betwixt a New Testament figure, and a modern rite or ceremony, be a sufficient proof of allusion to that rite or ceremony in the apostolic churches, I should be glad to have an absurdity pointed out to me, which may not by this method, be palmed upon the apostles, or their Master. How do the baptists prove the apostle does not allude to the sign of the cross, when he speaks of our being baptized into the death of Christ, and of our being crucified with him? The resemblance which such a mode of baptism bears to the manner of Christ's death, and of our dying to sin, called in the text, crucifixion, is sufficiently apparent. So also, how will he prove the apostles had not an eye to partial immersion, in what

is said about planting, and the ark? Supposing these modes to have been practised, it cannot, I think, be doubted, but they may be referred to in the above texts. But he will say, before you can establish your allusion, you must establish the fact, that the apostles used such modes of baptism.

The apostle, it is sufficiently apparent, uses these figures to denote the destruction of sin, and the obligation of a christian to live a holy life. "Our old man is crucified with him." By the ordinance, we are transplanted from the world into the church, where we are brought into conformity with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection, by the death and burial of our sins, and by living a new life of holiness. Thus the propriety of the figures is evident, without supposing any reference to the mode of baptism; we ought not therefore to admit the allusion, till we have proved such a mode was in use at the time. In Col. ii. 11, 12, baptism is called the circumcision of Christ; and we are said to be buried with him in baptism. Here are two figures applied to the rite, to denote, as the connexion clearly shows, the cutting off, and putting away of sin. As this is the use to which the apostle applies the figures, we cannot pretend to say there is any allusion to a mode of baptism in either; unless we can prove in some other way, that a mode was used by him in his administrations, to which one of these figures will apply; for without such previous proof, we must allow both figures to have such an allusion, or neither of them. An ingenious man might invent a method of baptizing, which would bear some resemblance to circumcision; but this resemblance could be no proof of the apostle's reference to his mode, unless he could show by other arguments, that it was practised in the apostolic age.

I have taken the more pains with these supposed allusions, because Mr. Booth occupies many pages in his book with them; and most baptist writers lay very great stress upon them. Whereas they prove just nothing at all in this controversy; for we cannot

know they have any reference to immersion, till it is demonstrated by another process, that the apostles practised immersion : when the demonstration is given, the allusion may be admitted ; but since the proof must produce the conviction, the conviction can add nothing to the proof.

When, however, we ask for proof that the apostles, acting under the commission of Christ, used immersion, we are referred to one person, who was neither man, woman, nor child ; being, perhaps, in a sup of water at the time of receiving the ordinance. And if this does not prove christian baptism by immersion, not a solitary example of it can be found in the New Testament !

I shall probably be reminded, that though the baptists make the commission of Christ the law of christian baptism, and the practice of the apostles the interpretation of the law, and thus get rid of the evidence arising from Jewish baptisms, in favour of sprinkling and pouring ; yet, as I have argued for the modes in use prior to the law being practised under it, it will follow, if John practised immersion, that christians would follow his example.

I feel no objection to grant this. The baptismal purifications among the Jews, by sprinkling and pouring, it must, however, be observed, were in use at the time John was baptizing, and after his work was finished. Supposing, then, John used immersion, there would be three modes employed when Christ instituted his rite ; and my argument goes to prove the same modes would still be used, if the law of Christ, as interpreted by the practice of the apostles, did not limit the administration to one of them. This I contend for still. I hope I have proved there is no such limitation in favour of immersion ; I might, therefore, now drop my pen. But since a baptist will not readily allow of any other mode than his own having been used by the apostles, especially when it is conceded they might borrow immersion from John, I must enter into a more particular examination of John's baptism.

The proof of immersion by the Baptist is drawn from circumstances : he baptized in the river Jordan, and at Enon, where there was much water.

As to the first, " The laying any weight on its being said, were baptized in Jordan, shows extreme ignorance of the original. For, 1. The word *en* here translated 'in,' is in no less than a hundred and fifty places of the New Testament, (a learned gentleman hath observed,) rendered 'with.' And had it thus been rendered here, baptized with Jordan—meaning with the water of that river ; it would have been a form of speaking, neither more figurative nor improper, than is familiar both in scripture and in common life. But, to lay no stress on this,—

" 2. The word *en* is more than a hundred times in the New Testament rendered 'at,' and *en to Iordane* may most justly be rendered 'at the river Jordan ;' and so the whole strength of the argument, from John's baptizing in Jordan, evaporates at once.

" Can it be proved that any person baptized, was so much as in the water at all ?

" The putting of this question may appear singular to some, who would be ready to say, Can anything be more evident than this ? Did not our Lord come up out of Jordan ? Did not Philip and the eunuch go down into, and come up out of the water ? The truth is, that, whether they went into the water or not, depends upon three small words : *eis*, *ek*, *ex*, and *apo*. The two last are used in the New Testament, I suppose, a hundred times, to signify 'from ;' and the first as often, to signify 'to ;' and they necessarily signify no more than to the water, and from the water ; so here is no proof that any one person baptized, was in the water at all."*

Candour requires, however, the acknowledgment that though the above Greek particles may be, and often are, rendered at, to, and from ; yet the rendering in our authorised version, it cannot be denied, is sup-

* Evangelical Magazine.

ported by numerous examples ; and supposing the sacred writers wished to convey the information, that the subjects of the ordinance were really in the water, they could not have chosen words more appropriate than those they have used.

The Greek particles, it is allowed by both parties, admit of so much latitude of interpretation as makes it difficult sometimes to ascertain their precise meaning. A translator must regard the subjects to which they are applied, and the connexion in which they stand. Thus, when we find these words connected with the subject of baptism, each party can translate them so as to agree with his own practice ; and can quote a hundred examples in support of his version. If there be anything in the connexion, or anywhere else, which settles the mode, that must determine the rendering ; but since they will admit of a literal translation, so as to agree with any mode, it is certain they can contribute nothing in proof of one more than another.

For instance : if it can be shown, independent of these words, that baptism was by dipping, then the texts in dispute must be rendered in, into, out of. But if immersion cannot be proved independent of them, they can contribute nothing to the proof, because they may be rendered just as literally to agree with another mode. If it be ascertained, the mode was by sprinkling or pouring on the subject, as he stood beside the water, these words may be rendered at, to, from ; for they contain no evidence on the other side of the question. If there be reason to believe the subject received the ordinance by pouring or sprinkling, as he stood in the water, the particles may be translated in, into, out of ; and yet afford no proof of total immersion. In fact, since they can do nothing towards settling the mode, they ought to have no place in the controversy.

A baptist friend will desire me to look carefully at the texts where these particles stand, and see if I can find nothing in favour of immersion. John was bap-

tizing in or at Jordan. Now what occasion to go to a large river, if he only sprinkled or poured a little water upon the people? we never hear of those who practice sprinkling among us, going to rivers, or where there is much water, to perform their ceremony. The places he made choice of were suitable, supposing he used immersion; but it would seem very ridiculous in him to go to a great river with a company of people, merely to sprinkle them. The translators have, therefore, only done justice to the texts in the rendering they have given.

This contains, I believe, the whole strength of the baptist argument upon this point. We do not go with people to a river to sprinkle them; nor do we read of John going with the people to Jordan to immerse them. He was stationed beside the river, and he baptized the people with its water; and if we were stationed in a heathen country beside a river, and the people resorted to us for the ordinance, we should not think of going from the river for water, but to it, and should baptize them at it, or perhaps in it. If the country were warm, if the custom were to wear sandals instead of shoes, and to go without stockings; if, on this account, the frequent washing of the feet were necessary and refreshing, and this ceremony ranked among the first rites of hospitality, all which was the case in Palestine, I verily believe I should invite the people into the water, though I should only sprinkle them.

The chief weight of many arguments is owing to our inattention to the differences of times, places, circumstances, manners, etc. Modernize, and lay the scene of John's ministry in this country, as most I presume do; and then examine your ideas, and see what truth there is in them. You provide him with a large church or chapel, in a large town; his hearers are affected, and at the close of the service, they request him to baptize them; he marches down at the head of them to a river, for this purpose. You never see ministers going with either adults or infants

to a river to sprinkle them ; but you see ministers, who call themselves baptists, going down into rivers to immerse people ; and you conclude that John the Baptist used immersion. John, however, did not live in a large town, but in the wilderness ; he had neither church, nor chapel, nor house, to hold the people who resorted to him ; the scene of his ministry is the side of a river ; he might have a hut for his residence, but he certainly preached out of doors. Geographers inform us the banks of the river abounded with trees ; and as the climate was hot, he and his congregation would surely take their station under their shade, and enjoy the atmosphere, which would be cool in consequence of its vicinity to the water. Now suppose he only used sprinkling, where, under these circumstances, could he so conveniently and agreeably perform it, as in the river just at hand ?

But why, it will be asked, did John take his station beside a river, or at Enon, where there was much water, if it were not for the convenience of baptizing ? I answer, 1. Because the situation was central. "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." As John did not itinerate much, it was important to select a situation for the exercise of his ministry, which would be most convenient for attendance by the surrounding inhabitants. As the vicinity of the river appears to have been populous, prudence would suggest the propriety of his taking his station near one of the fords, to give the people on both sides, an opportunity of hearing his doctrine. When he removed from the Jordan to Enon, no one ever supposed he chose the latter situation because it was more suitable for baptizing ; for after all that has been said respecting the mighty waters of the Enon, its rills and purling streams will bear no comparison with the river. He removed to Enon, which was a populous district, merely to give the people in its vicinity an opportunity of receiving his rite, and of hearing his doctrine. And if he selected Enon, because it was a situation favourable to the collection

of a large congregation, the very same reason would induce him in the first instance, to open his ministry on the banks of the Jordan. But,—

2. When we look at the immense numbers who resorted from all parts to hear John, it would be absolutely necessary for him to take his station where water was plentiful, supposing but little were needed for baptism. “Then went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and all the region round about Jordan.” (Mark i. 4; Matt. iii. 5.) Make what deductions you will from these statements, you cannot make any common sense of the words, if you do not suppose the numbers to have been very great. They would not all come on foot. Water would be wanted for drink for the people and their cattle, for culinary purposes, and for their various ablutions. In preaching to such large congregations, no man’s lungs could stand above two or three hours a day, for weeks successively. The people, therefore, must, at the least, have remained a week or two. Suppose fifty persons to arrive from a distant village. Twenty head of cattle would be few enough to carry their provisions, stores, and those of the company, who, on account of age, infirmity, or respectability, would be unable or unwilling to walk. Suppose them to stay only a week, and their cattle would consume more water than would be necessary for bathing a hundred persons. But water would serve for cattle, after it had been used for the immersion of men and women. It would be easy to demonstrate that four times as much water would be needed for other things, as would be required for immersion. After it had served for the ordinance, it might all be used for other purposes. It could not possibly, therefore, make any difference as to the quantity of water wanted, whether the people were dipped or only sprinkled.

In a country like this, where water is inconveniently abundant in many places, and the want of it seldom felt in any, it is not easy for many people to enter into the scriptural representations on the subject.

Little and much are comparative terms. What we should deem little, would in Palestine, and many warm countries, be deemed much. In England it would not enter into our calculations, in providing for the accommodation of several thousand people, to seek a place where there is much water; we should rather be on the look-out for a dry situation; but in warm countries where water is scarce, it is quite otherwise. When Sennacherib invaded this very country, where John baptized and preached, we read that "they stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water." (2 Chron. xxxii. 4.) It was thought the Assyrian army would need much water; but no one ever suspected their king intended to baptize them in it; no, they wanted it for other purposes; and so did the thousands who attended the ministry of John.

Much unnecessary pains has, I think, been taken to show that the much water, or many waters, about Enon, were small streams, not of sufficient depth for immersion; for though this may I believe be pretty clearly made out, yet we are not warranted in affirming the Baptist did not use that mode. There would be plenty of cisterns and baths, which would answer the purpose very well, if we had only sufficient reason to believe he dipped his disciples. All I pretend to prove here, is, and to my mind the proof is quite satisfactory, that if a pedobaptist minister had to preach in the same country, and to such immense multitudes, he must choose similar situations.

But after all, if a baptist think John selected such places merely because he immersed his disciples, he must take the consequence: we nowhere read of Jesus Christ and his apostles administering the ordinance in such situations, therefore they did not baptize by immersion. The apostle Paul, and Cornelius with his family and friends, appear to have been baptized in private houses; the jailer and his family were baptized in a prison; and the three thousand on the day of

pentecost could not be baptized in a river, for there was none near the city; and the brook Kedron was probably dry, or nearly so, as this time was about the latter end of the dry season. The baptists are obliged to have recourse to baths for immersion in such cases as these; and if they were in such plenty, John had no more occasion for rivers and mighty streams than the apostles.

Admitting I have assigned the true reason why John preached and baptized where water was plentiful, we can easily account for it, why Jesus Christ and the apostles are never represented as occupying similar stations. John had no coadjutors in his work; he travelled but little, since we read of only three places where he was baptizing; namely, the Jordan, Enon, and Bethabara: vast multitudes resorted to him from all parts; and to prevent their perishing for want of water, he was obliged to choose situations where this necessary of life abounded. Jesus Christ travelled much; he had twelve apostles to assist him in his work; when the scene of labour was enlarged, he sent out seventy disciples; and after his ascension, he commanded his apostles and ministers to go out into all the world. The people came to John; Christ and his ministers went to the people. This difference of circumstances fully accounts for John baptizing at Jordan and Enon, and neither Christ nor his apostles administering the ordinance in such places.

If the only reason why John baptized where there was much water, was because it was necessary on account of the mode which he used; and if Christ and his apostles, as the baptists affirm, used the same mode, then they baptized in much water also. But they gave the ordinance in private houses, which John did not; and we never read of their giving it in a river or much water, though John did both: either, therefore, they did not use John's mode, or else it was not on account of the mode that John stationed himself at Jordan and Enon. The baptists are perfectly welcome to take which of these consequences they prefer.

If the first, christian immersion cannot be proved from the baptism of John ; if the second, there is no evidence of his immersing his disciples ; and if immersion cannot be proved from the baptism of John, I am bold to say, it cannot be proved from any part of the Bible. Let us now look at the other side of this question.

“It seems an observation of some weight in this debate, that as water was used by divine appointment under the Jewish law, in a figurative and sacramental manner, or as an emblem of moral purity ; and the christian ceremony of baptizing is, undoubtedly, adopted from this usage under the law ; so the only way, in which one person (the priest) was ever directed or known to use it upon another, for this symbolical or sacramental purpose, was by sprinkling or pouring it on, never by dipping him into it.

“There were divers baptisms under the law. (Heb. ix. 10.) These baptisms were generally performed by the priest ; but the priest amongst the various rites he is directed to use, to sanctify and cleanse a person, and receive him into the church, is never once directed to dip or plunge him in water, but only to sprinkle or pour it upon him.

“The priests’ plunging a person, in order to his separation or cleansing, is a ceremony quite strange, and absolutely unheard of through all the sacred records. Persons were, indeed, on some occasions, directed to plunge or bathe themselves ; but that one man should take another, and plunge him under water, is a thing utterly uncommanded, unprecedented, and unknown, throughout the whole constitution and history of the Jewish church. It may, therefore, strongly be presumed, not to have been the practice either of John or of Jesus Christ, when the christian was set up.

“For John being of the priestly race ; and beginning his ministrations agreeable to their law, at thirty years old ; and using, like them, an application of water to the body, as an emblem of moral purity ; it is left to any impartial judgment, whether he is, most ration-

ally, supposed to have plunged men under water, (a thing unpractised amongst them,) or, whether he only sprinkled or poured water on them, a rite divinely instituted, and every day familiarly practised in that church."*

The way seems now to be prepared for the inquiry, In what manner was christian baptism administered? For my own part, I attach so little importance to the mode, that when I had shown immersion could prefer no exclusive claims, and especially when I had shown it had no evidence at all, I was disposed to drop the matter. But if I were to leave the subject here, I know my baptist friends would talk loudly of the necessity of laws being precise and determinate in the meaning of their terms, and of the improbability of so important a matter as the mode of baptism being left to speculation and conjecture. I admit the law is precise and plain enough as to baptizing. That it drops a hint as to the mode, I flatly deny. The apostles, however, must have used some mode; and it may rationally be supposed they have not left us entirely in the dark respecting it. I will, therefore, proceed to give the reasons why I believe they practised sprinkling and pouring.

It will go a long way towards settling this question to inquire, how the baptism of the Holy Spirit was administered.

"I indeed baptize you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." This form of speech occurs no less than six times in the New Testament. (See Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 33; Acts i. 5; xi. 16.)

It is agreed on all hands, that the apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost, on the day of pentecost; and the mode of the spiritual administration is particularly noted in the explanation which the apostle Peter gave on the occasion: "This is that which was spoken

* Towgood on Dipping not the only Manner of Baptizing, p. 104. Note, 4th edition.

by the prophet Joel : And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh. And on my servants, and on my hand-maidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit. Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.") Acts ii. 16, 18, 33.) When Peter and John arrived at Samaria, they "prayed for the disciples, that they might receive the Holy Ghost ; for as yet he was fallen upon none of them." (Acts viii. 16.) While Peter was addressing Cornelius and his friends, "The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision were astonished because that on the gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts x. 44, 45.) In explaining this affair to the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem, Peter remarked, "The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." (Acts xi. 15, 16.) The apostle Peter then, it is certain, understood this effusion of the Spirit, to be the promised spiritual baptism. The coming of the Holy Spirit is generally represented in the same manner. "When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them." (Acts xix. 6.)

In these explanations of the baptism of the Spirit, the allusion is not to dipping or plunging ; but to the pedobaptist mode, according to which the water is poured out, falls, and is shed forth upon the subject.

As far as the force of the term can go, in settling the question, it applies to the water and Spirit equally ; the above evidence is, therefore, conclusive, that the word baptize, as applied to the ordinance, affords no proof whatever in favour of immersion.

The two baptisms are so frequently connected together, and in such a way, that the one is very evidently a sign of the other—the water of the Spirit. A sign is the more perfect, the more nearly it resembles the thing signified ; and since the Spirit falls upon

the subject, the water, to be an expressive emblem, should be administered in the same manner. It is not easy to explain why the baptism of the Spirit is represented by pouring, etc., if it be not an allusion to the mode of using the water in the ordinance. The terms, as applied to the Spirit, it is universally admitted, are figurative; it is also admitted, they allude to a certain mode of using water ritually; and no good reason can be given, why the allusion is not to the manner of using water in the christian rite, especially as the two baptisms are so often mentioned together in scripture.

The baptism of the Spirit by pouring and shedding, is very embarrassing to our baptist brethren. If this difficulty cannot be got over, their cause is lost. On the day of pentecost, when the apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost, we are told he "filled all the house where they were sitting:" they were thus surrounded by, and immersed in, the Spirit. But the text does not represent the Spirit as filling the house. "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." (Acts ii. 2.) Here is an account of a sound from heaven; a sound resembling a rushing mighty wind; this sound filled all the place where they were sitting; and if you please, though it sounds rather odd, they were immersed in the sound. But this is not to be confounded with the cloven tongues, nor with the Holy Spirit, mentioned in the following verses. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The sound filled the place; the Spirit filled the persons; the sound was without them, the Spirit was within them. The prophet did not commit such a blunder as to mistake the sound of wind for the voice of the Spirit. "And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind." (1 Kings xix. 11.)

But granting the Spirit is intended by the sound, the baptists' manner of administering the ordinance is not helped by it; for the sound or Spirit came down—

descended upon them. The baptismal element came upon the subjects; they did not descend into it: the element was active, the subjects were passive; which exactly corresponds with our mode: in the mode of our differing brethren, this order is completely reversed.

The baptists generally confine the baptism of the Spirit to the apostles, as the subjects of it; and to that plentiful donation of extraordinary gifts, with which they were endued on the day of pentecost, as the matter of it.

When, however, we come to examine these particulars, we soon perceive they will not hang together.

1. "The sound filled all the house where they were sitting." How many were sitting in the house? We read in the preceding chapter, verse 15: "The number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty." "And when the day of pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord, in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven," etc. There were, then, about an hundred and twenty persons sitting in the house, when this sound came down from heaven; and since "it filled all the house," the twelve apostles could not be more completely immersed in it, than the other hundred and eight disciples. How, then, can the baptism of the Spirit, upon baptist principles, be restricted to the apostles, even allowing the sound means the Spirit?

2. In the preceding chapter, verses 4, 5, our Lord had commanded the apostles to remain in Jerusalem, and "wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." Compare this with chapter ii.

33. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." The first of these texts explains the promise of the Father, to mean the baptism of the Spirit; and the second shows the promised baptism was administered by shedding forth.

3. The baptism of the Spirit was not limited to the apostles. When many of the pharisees and sadducees came to John for baptism, he said unto them: "I indeed baptize you with water; but he that cometh after me, shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." (Matt. iii. 11.) In the account given by the apostle Peter of the conversion of Cornelius and his friends, he says, "The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning;" and this reminded the apostle of the promised spiritual baptism, which it certainly could not have done, had he not been convinced, they really received it. (Acts xi. 15, 16.) The members of the Corinthian church had all received the spiritual baptism. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or gentiles." (1 Cor. xii. 13.)

4. The baptism of the Spirit consisted in the communion of his ordinary, as well as extraordinary gifts. But I need not argue this point, as I could serve my own cause most effectually by adopting the sentiments of the baptists. They talk about the fulness of spiritual gifts conferred on many of the first christians, which was so abundant, they say, as to baptize or immerse them; yet this copious effusion is represented in a very beggarly manner by the sprinkling of a few drops of water. What was the real fact? Why, the individual subjects of these extraordinary grants had each only a scanty supply, though they amounted to something considerable in the aggregate. The members of the Corinthian church, we have seen, were all baptized with the Spirit; but each individual, instead of having a fulness of spiritual gifts, possessed only one: "For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another faith, by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit,

dividing to every man severally as he will." (1 Cor. xii. 8—11.) A few drops of water would be quite sufficient to represent a single spiritual gift.

But I will not avail myself of this advantage, as the ordinary gifts of the Spirit, I doubt not, are principally intended. John, we have seen, promised to all who received his baptism, a future baptism of the Spirit. Yet no one ever dreamed they were all to possess miraculous powers. The apostle Peter, we have noticed, identifies our Lord's promise of a spiritual baptism, with the promise of the Spirit in the prophecy of Joel; and this latter promise runs, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." But surely it was not intended all flesh should possess these extraordinary gifts! By comparing Acts i. 4, 5; ii. 33—39, the apostle Peter, it will be seen, extends the promise of the spiritual baptism "to as many as the Lord our God shall call" to embrace the christian religion. But the extraordinary gifts, by the confession of nearly all parties, have long since ceased; the ordinary gracious influences must, therefore, be principally intended by the promise. Thus a spiritual baptism will be administered in the church to the end of time; and this ordinance will be given according to the pedobaptist mode; for it is written, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh."

It is objected by some writers to this view of the subject, that the apostle mentions but one baptism (Ephes. iv. 4) under the christian economy; whereas we contend for two—one of water, the other of the Spirit.

I agree with the baptists, in opposition to the quakers, that the apostle in this text refers to the baptism by water; and of this kind there is but one. The apostle, I presume, had his eye on the various ritual baptisms, (Heb. ix. 10,) in use among the Jews, which are all abolished, and in the place of which there is but one ritual baptism, instituted under the gospel. He could not intend to exclude the spiritual baptism, because he speaks of the Corinthians as hav-

ing received it; (1 Cor. xii. 13;) and because he mentions a plurality of baptisms, (which cannot be reduced to less than two,) among the foundation doctrines of the Christian system: "Not laying again the foundation of the doctrine of baptisms." (Heb. vi. 1, 2.)

As the baptists contend strenuously for a unity of action in the administration of the rite, the question is, what was that action? They say, dipping, or plunging. According to this, the subject is active, and goes into the element; the element is passive, and receives him. According to our action, this order is reversed: the subject is passive, and receives the element; the element is active, and comes upon him. The baptism of the Spirit exactly agrees with our action, and is in direct opposition to the action of our differing brethren. We never read of any one being dipped or plunged into the Spirit; but always of the Spirit coming upon the person. Now if the word baptize, as Mr. Booth and others insist, does of itself determine the action, and will admit of no variety, it must follow, when we have given clear examples of the baptismal element coming upon the subject, that it is unlawful to administer the ordinance after any other manner.

But have we any independent proof of the baptism of water being administered upon the same principle, as the baptism of the Spirit? I think we have. When Cornelius, his family, and friends, had received the baptism of the Spirit, the apostle asks, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?" When of two things, the one is active, and the other passive, you never think of applying a restraining power to the passive subject; the supposition is absurd: the restraint must be imposed on the active agent. Now in what possible sense could the water be forbidden, if it had not been customary to bring it upon the subjects? According to the baptist mode, if there were any forbidding, it should respect the subject of the ordinance, and not the element; but it

is in strict accordance with our mode to forbid the element. The apostle evidently means, "Can any man forbid water being brought into the room for the baptism of those persons?"

Acts xix. 1—7, contains an account of only one meeting; and as none of the parties came to it, with the expectation of receiving the ordinance, we cannot suppose the room was furnished with a bath.

The jailer and his family were instructed and baptized the same hour of the night. There might be a bath in the prison, and there might not: we know nothing about it. What we read is, "He washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." But there could be no occasion for the jailer to wash the stripes of Paul and Silas, if they went down with him and his family into the water to immerse them; in this case they would sufficiently wash themselves. Besides, were Paul and Silas, so soon after a severe flogging, in a fit state for standing in the water so long as would be necessary for the baptism of a large family? And was there no danger to any of the parties being immersed at so unseasonable an hour as midnight? Our baptist friends will not admit of any relaxation of what they deem the primitive practice, in favour of the inhabitants of a colder climate. If the whole of a large family in this country were called out of their warm beds at midnight, and plunged into a cold bath, who would be answerable for the consequences? A basin of water, I presume, was used for washing their stripes; and a fresh supply in the same utensil would serve for the baptism of the family.

The way in which the spiritual baptism was administered, will cast light on the meaning of the Greek particles, in relation to this subject. No less than six times we read of John saying, "I indeed baptize you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." The baptists suppose the particle *en* in these texts should not be rendered "with," but "in" water, "in" the Holy Spirit. This, however, is contrary to

the fact of the case; for they were not dipped in the Spirit, but the Spirit came upon them. They were baptized with the Spirit, not in it. The particle is used in relation to the water, as well as to the Spirit; and in both cases it refers to the same subject, namely, baptism; it cannot, therefore, have a meaning in the first member of the sentence, which differs from its clearly ascertained sense in the last; our translators have, therefore, very properly rendered it in both cases, with. This particle is used in 1 Corinthians, x. 2, where the Israelites were baptized with water, in the cloud, or in the sea: the water came upon them.

Here, then, are plain instances of baptism, both by water and by the Spirit, in which the baptismal element came upon the subjects, agreeable to our mode, and in opposition to the mode of our brethren. These instances too, let it be observed, are taken from texts where the particle in question is used; it cannot possibly, therefore, by its own force, determine that the subject was active, and the element passive. It cannot help the baptist cause, render this particle how you will. Suppose you read in,—the Israelites were baptized in the cloud, and in the sea: John baptized in water, and in Jordan: Jesus Christ baptized in the Holy Spirit. The inquiry is, how were these baptisms performed? The baptists argue from the force of the terms. To baptize, they say, is to dip or plunge. The particle *en*, they insist, shows the subjects were in the element. They put both together, and conclude, that the subjects of the ordinance went into the element, and were dipped all over in it. Now compare this with the circumstances, and see how they will agree. Did the Israelites go into the waters of the sea? and were they dipped and immersed in them? Did the first christians go into the Spirit? and were they immersed in him by dipping?

Render the particle with, in all these texts, and you have a sense which exactly harmonises with all the circumstances. The Israelites were baptized with the

cloud, and with the sea: John baptized with water—with Jordan, that is, with the water of Jordan: Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit.

There is one consideration which fully satisfies my mind that I administer baptism in a way which is pleasing to the Almighty; and that is, I follow his example. When God gives the ordinance, the subject is always passive, and the element active. He baptizes with the Holy Spirit; but it is by pouring, shedding, etc. He baptized the Israelites by sprinkling. He baptized Nebuchadnezzar. (Dan. iv. 33; v. 21.) The septuagint reads *ebaphe*, which our translators render “wet,” but which the baptists grant, signifies to baptize: “His body was baptized with the dew of heaven.” He was not dipped in the dew; but the dew gently distilled upon him: he was passive; the element was active: he was baptized by sprinkling. That same process of reasoning, therefore, by which our ministrations are made void, will equally nullify the ministrations of God himself.

When we can find no scripture authority in support of a particular practice, we are at liberty to scrutinize it as closely as we please. To administer the ordinance upon the baptist plan, several things are necessary: 1. A sufficient quantity of water for immersion. 2. A public situation; for our brethren generally declaim rather loudly against a private administration. 3. A house for undressing and dressing, contiguous to the water. 4. A sufficient number of bathing dresses, to accommodate all the candidates who are not provided with a change of apparel. In some instances, the two latter particulars have been dispensed with in this country. But if we look at the baptism of John, both were highly needful. Many of his hearers came from far, and, therefore, would require a change of dress; for our brethren do not suppose they received the ordinance in a state of nudity, or were sent home for many miles in their wet clothes. Of the thousands whom John baptized, many would be so poor as not to possess a change of apparel;

and many others on account of the great inconvenience of carrying another suit so far, would not be provided. Many bathing dresses would consequently be wanted ; more, I think, than John could afford to furnish ; and if he bathed women as well as men, two dressing houses would be necessary. When we go into detail, the difficulties are rather numerous, and pressing.

Three thousand were baptized on the day of pentecost. Some of our brethren have supposed several days might be taken up in giving them the ordinance. But the text will not allow of this : "Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized : and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." In the order of the text, their baptism precedes their union with the church ; and both baptists and pedobaptists hold, that people must receive the ordinance before they are admitted to membership : they must, therefore, have been all baptized the same day.

Where would a place be found suitable for the purpose ? There was no river near the city : the brook Kedron, for a reason assigned in another place, was probably dry, or nearly so. There could have been no previous preparation for the baptism of such multitudes, because neither the apostles, nor the people had a day's previous notice of it. If immersion, therefore, were used, they must have availed themselves of such conveniences as the city afforded. There were, no doubt, baths sufficient for the immersion of ten thousand people. But then the baths were constructed with a view to privacy. There could be no public display here ; and yet many think the publicity of the ordinance is essential to its validity. Besides, the keepers of the baths were probably unconverted Jews ; in which case they would not permit gentlemen to bathe the ladies ; for though we allow it might be done without any unholy desires being excited, or any improper freedoms being taken, yet as such a custom had never obtained among the Jews, and did not at all comport with their ideas of delicacy, we may be sure they would

not suffer such an innovation ; it would have destroyed the reputation of the establishment for ever.

The temper of Jewish husbands deserves a moment's consideration. That they repudiated their wives for trivial matters, is well known. What impression would it make on the mind of an unbelieving husband, to hear of his wife, having been handled, and dipped in the water, by another man? If the thing were done in private, would not his jealousy be raised to the highest pitch? and if in public, would he not feel overwhelmed with shame? In either case, she might expect to be greeted with a bill of divorcement. If the divine law requires immersion, it must undoubtedly be complied with, and all hazards must be run; but with the dearth of evidence in favour of it, which the New Testament presents, I cannot persuade myself that the apostles would put the domestic peace of Jewish wives in such peril, as to require their submission to a ceremony which would be abhorrent to the national ideas of female delicacy and honour, and which would probably occasion the dissolution of the marriage union; especially, when I find the apostle Paul carrying his notions of female modesty so far, as to forbid a woman to put off her veil, even in a religious assembly, and in order to perform an act of worship. (1 Cor. xi. 1—16.)

We are not generally quite so nice in our notions as the Jews were; and yet among us it would be thought very indelicate were men at any of our watering places, appointed to bathe the other sex. In sea bathing, where machines are used, it would unquestionably be safer for men, than women, to attend the machines appropriated to the use of the ladies, and to assist them into, and out of the water. But were a proprietor of machines, at Scarborough, for instance, to advertise, that, on account of the superior safety of it, his men should bathe ladies as well as gentlemen, no modest woman would avail herself of their services; and the force of public opinion would soon oblige him to engage female assistants. And yet, instead of any

squeamish refinements prevailing in such places, many not very religious parents, have thought, that the virtue of their daughters has not been much improved by visiting them.

If there be no appearance of indelicacy in the practice of our brethren, why do they generally represent this going into the water as a taking up the cross? I do not recollect, in the perusal of their writings, to have met with similar observations in reference to the other positive institute; they never, I believe, speak of the reception of the Lord's supper, as a taking up of the cross. And why should it be esteemed more a cross to receive the Lord's baptism than to eat his supper, if there were nothing more revolting to our ideas in the one than in the other?

To prevent the floating of the clothes on the surface of the water, it is the custom in some places, I understand, to have small pieces of lead inserted in the lower hem of the bathing garments. This is very proper. At the only exhibition of the kind which I ever witnessed, a young lady was much distressed for want of this convenience. The apostles, however, could not have been provided with dresses of this description, for the three thousand, on the day of pentecost. But if a sense of propriety induces us to adopt precautions which the apostles could not use, they must either have risked all the accidents against which we feel the necessity of providing, or they must have performed the rite after another manner than is practised by our brethren; the latter, no doubt, was the fact.

I know it is not easy to employ the argument I am now upon, without giving offence. I should be sincerely sorry to incur the displeasure of my baptist friends; I have no intention of hurting their feelings; I can give them full credit for the purity of their thoughts, during their administrations; and, if their practice could be proved from scripture, I would make all my ideas of indecorum give place to a, Thus saith the Lord, and would take up my cross, and follow them into the water. But when their practice has

been proved to have no support from the word of God, I cannot but consider this argument as both legitimate and weighty.

As the rite is administered by the baptists, there are three parties concerned; the minister, the subjects, and the spectators. Since they contend for the publicity of the rite, we are warranted in arguing on the impression which the ceremony is likely to make on unbelievers. The public, as distinguished from the church, in primitive times, consisted of unbelievers—Jews or gentiles, or both. If God required his ministers to perform the rite in situations where the enemies of christianity might have an opportunity of witnessing it, their benefit must surely be intended: if they have no interest in the transaction, why are they made parties to it? Suppose Timothy, who was a young minister, giving the ordinance in a river to some virgins, in the presence of grave Jews. He embraces the ladies very tenderly, puts them under water, and raises them on their feet again; they walk dripping wet through a crowd of saints and sinners, to the house of a friend: what impression is made on the venerable sons of Abraham? The sight would be quite new to them. For a man to have assisted a woman in a common bath, would have been an outrage on public decency. Would the consideration of its being a religious ceremony diminish its enormity in their view? They could not, of course, view it with christian feelings; they could only compare it with their own religious washings; but as in these, the sexes never dipped each other, their religious feelings could not lessen that natural sense of impropriety which such a scene would produce. I fear they would be proof against all attempts to convert them; and would go home thanking God for the superiority of their morals and religion, neither of which would allow them to violate the common decencies of life.

Now what I insist upon is, that for a man to immerse a woman is an indelicate action; that the practice is liable to accidental exposures and abuses, which

have, in fact, often taken place; that in many instances, in the apostolic times, no preparation could have been previously made for the ordinance; and, therefore, upon the baptist plan, many queer incidents could scarcely have been avoided; that the exhibition of such scenes before Jews and heathens could only tend to excite jealousy, disgust, or ridicule; and that, since no clear warrant from scripture can be advanced in support of the practice, it may fairly be presumed to be displeasing to God.

In reply to remarks on the danger of cold bathing, to certain constitutions, our friends generally refer us to the opinions of physicians, who have recommended the practice as salutary. But no medical man will advise the use of the bath to a number of people, at any season of the year, without any previous preparation. The three thousand who were baptized on the day of pentecost, would consist of both sexes, and of a great variety of bodily constitutions, infirmity, and habit. Now take three thousand persons promiscuously out of any crowd, and try if you can find a physician who will pronounce it either salutary or safe for them all to be immediately plunged into a cold bath!

It will not do to talk about waiting till the body is in a proper state to enter the water; because on the day of pentecost there was no waiting.—they were all baptized the same day; and I do not want a better proof, that none of them were immersed. The apostle Paul at the time of his baptism, had neither eaten nor drank for three days. In addition to the debility which this long fast must have produced, he would be “greatly enfeebled by the mighty shock which he received from the vision in the way, as well as by the great remorse with which he reviewed, and repented of his crimes. It was now also the depth of winter, (about the 25th of January,) as the learned have supposed. That in this weakly and feeble state, he arose and was baptized, by being totally put under water,—seems, to say the least, to have scarce an air of proba-

bility."* If any case could justify delay, surely this is one. In this state, when Ananias is introduced to him, he addresses him with, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized." "And he arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened." (Acts ix. 9, 18, 19; xxii. 16.) He did not, we see, break his fast till the ordinance was over. Can any man suppose, that in this feverish and exhausted state, and in the middle of winter, he was taken out of the house in search of a river, or much water, and plunged into it?

That the baptists' mode requires delay, in certain cases, cannot be disputed; and if they can produce one instance of the apostles delaying baptism, we will yield the whole cause; but if they cannot, the necessary conclusion is, that since immersion will not agree with apostolic practice, the apostles did not use it.

I know some of our brethren assert, very confidently, that no evil consequences ever result from their mode.

I will not stop to scrutinize the truth of this assertion. Suppose, for the sake of argument, we grant it; it may be accounted for: 1. From their delaying the ordinance, which we have seen the apostles did not; and, 2. From the comfortable accommodations to be found in most of their chapels; which conveniences the apostles very seldom, if ever enjoyed.

Were many persons who are unaccustomed to bathing, to go into a cold bath in January, for no other purpose than to bathe, it would, no doubt, be attended with very serious consequences, to, at least, some of them. Were the baptists, therefore, to follow the example of the apostles, and, without any previous preparation for the ordinance, give it at all seasons of the year, to all persons indiscriminately, who could be persuaded to receive it, the natural evil effects which would result from common bathing under these circumstances, could only be prevented by miraculous interposition. The advocates for immersion, however,

* Towgood on the Manner of Baptizing, pp. 105, 106, 4th edit.

have not, I believe, much faith in these miracles. If persons never took colds by being immersed in rivers, how happens it that, though they are so plentiful in this country, they are so seldom used? In almost if not quite in every place, where a baptist chapel is erected, there is a baptistry for the ordinance, though there may be a river or much water near at hand. Since so much stress is laid upon the publicity of the ordinance, a fine, open, out-of-doors situation, seems much better adapted to the purpose, than a small bath in a secluded part of a chapel! Instead, however, of boldly trusting to the Lord, and going with John the Baptist into a river, a weak believer is accommodated with a bath of any temperature he may desire, and with a good fire in the vestry, by which he may change his dress. These things are now becoming so common, that it will soon, I suspect, be as rare a circumstance to visit a river for immersion, as for sprinkling. When we see so much defensive preparation, we can hardly forbear thinking there is some dread of an enemy.

The difficulty of accounting for the baptism, by immersion, of three thousand in one day, is supposed to be got over by the historical fact that a much greater number has occasionally been dipped within the same time. Mr. Booth, however, was aware that the great difficulty was, to conceive how the whole process could be conducted upon baptist principles. If we look at nothing but the mere circumstance of their immersion, this might with ease have been effected in a day. But they were the same day added to the church. Upon the baptist plan, the church has a right to hear and judge of the experience of every one who offers himself a candidate for baptism and membership, at the same time. Here are then three thousand persons to give an account of their religious attainments to the whole church at Jerusalem, and to undergo a rather severe inquisition as to their fitness for the ordinance and membership. Now to say nothing of the time taken up in preparing for and administering the ordinance, not a tenth part of the people

could have undergone a modern baptist examination in one day. But since the greater part had no christian experience to offer, our brethren would have forbidden them the water and the fellowship of saints.

According to the pedobaptist mode, there would be no difficulty attending the administration of the rite on the day of pentecost. We are not expressly told in what place the meeting was held; but it was probably the temple. No private house could have held so large a congregation; and it is certain the apostles and disciples met daily in the temple to preach and pray. (See Acts ii. 46; iii. 1; v. 12, 20, 42.) The temple was supplied with water for the use of both priests and people, in performing their various ablutions; and with this the apostles might baptize their converts, by aspersion, without inconvenience.

If immersion be the primitive mode, and the action be dipping, or plunging, it is a point of importance, both to morals and the significancy of the ordinance, to determine whether the subject should be clothed or naked. Neither the word baptize, nor any fact or circumstance recorded in the New Testament, gives the smallest ray of light upon this question. The Jewish law in some cases, required the people to purify their clothes and their persons by immersion; but this was never done after the baptist fashion: the clothes were put off the person, in order to be washed; and the person unclothed, bathed himself. Now since there are no instructions in the gospel, as to this subject, if the first christians, who were all of the Jewish nation, practised immersion, they must have done it in conformity with their long established religious custom, which was always in a state of nudity.

Baptism in the New Testament, is called "the washing of water—the washing of regeneration;" and the bodies of christians are said to be "washed with pure water." (Ephes. v. 26; Titus iii. 5; Heb. x. 22.) The baptists think, that, as our highest idea of natural purification arises from the immersion of the whole body in water, such immersion must be in-

tended in these, and similar texts, to illustrate the purity of the saints. The purity of christians, however, is much oftener represented by sprinkling than by washing. In the latter text, the apostle evidently alludes to Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 27, where the Lord, in reference to gospel times, says, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." This shows that a ritual washing, or cleansing, may be effected by sprinkling, just as well as by dipping. But suppose there was a literal washing of the whole body in the water, by which the filth of the flesh was put away, (1 Peter iii. 21,) how could it be accomplished, if the body were clothed? In this case, the clothes only would be washed; and they would prevent "the putting away of the filth of the flesh." No man in his sober senses, ever went into water clothed, when his object was to remove all natural defilement from his body. Did we ever hear of a person setting to work, with his stockings and shoes on, to wash his feet? or with his gloves on, to wash his hands? If the filth of the body, therefore, is to be literally washed away in baptism, that end is no better attained by dipping a person with his clothes on, than by sprinkling: the subject clearly should be naked.

I have purposely avoided entering into the inquiry, as to what was the practice of the church for the first few centuries after the apostolic age, because I have long since made up my mind, that what cannot be proved from scripture, is not obligatory on christians. My private opinion is, that the argument from antiquity is clearly in favour of infants as proper subjects, and of immersion as a mode very often connected with the ordinance. The author of "Facts and Evidences," has produced evidence which has considerable weight in it, to show, that the immersion of the ancients was merely an introductory ceremony; while baptism itself was administered by sprinkling or pouring. As our baptist friends lay uncommon stress upon the circumstance of the ancients having used immersion, I must take a little notice of it.

1. If the opinion of the foregoing author be correct, (and I think the reasons by which he supports it cannot easily be confuted,) immersion in the primitive times, differed essentially, in the intentions of it, from that which is practised among us; the one was merely a preparatory service, the other is the ordinance itself. In this view of the matter, pedobaptists conform to the primitive rite; they only omit a preliminary ceremony: whereas the baptists only observe the preliminary ceremony, and omit the primitive rite, which was of the essence of the ordinance.

2. In the immersion of the ancients, it is certain the body was naked. Bingham produces some incontrovertible testimonies in support of this fact. "St. Chrysostom, speaking of baptism, says, Men were as naked as Adam in paradise, but with this difference: Adam was naked because he had sinned, but in baptism a man was naked that he might be freed from sin: the one was divested of his glory, which he once had; but the other put off the old man, which he did as easily as his clothes." St. Ambrose says, "Men came as naked to the font, as they came into the world; and thence he draws an argument, by way of allusion to rich men, telling them, how absurd it was, that a man who was born naked of his mother, and received naked by the church, should think of going rich into heaven."* I should be glad to know the antiquity of the practice of immersing people in their clothes. Can this custom be traced back three centuries?

3. The mere circumstance of immersion being practised by the ancients in a state of nudity, is, I should hope, a sufficient proof that it was done in private. In the well-known passage of Chrysostom, where he complains of his enemies coming armed into his church, and killing some of his people, he speaks of the terror of the women in the baptistry, who were

* Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, book xi., chap. 11, sec. 1, where more to the same purpose may be found.

unclothed, in order to be baptized; and of their fleeing away naked, to escape the brutality of the soldiers. Were these baptisms public? Did the christians invite their heathen neighbours to witness the exhibition of virgins and matrons in a birth-day suit?

I can easily conceive how the ceremony was performed in a very modest manner. It would, of course, be private. There was an order of deaconesses in the ancient church, whose business it was to attend their own sex on these occasions. After the candidate was washed all over in the bath, I suppose she was dressed before she was presented to the minister for the ordinance; or else, as some have thought, he was introduced while she stood in the bath, and sprinkled or poured water upon her head; her female attendants having adjusted matters so as to comport with the most refined ideas of decorum.

What help, then, does the baptist cause receive from this appeal to antiquity? Why, the baptists practise immersion, and so did the ancient church, and, therefore, so did John the Baptist and the apostles. What demonstration can be made out more clearly?

But stop a moment. The primitive church, in this mode of arguing, is made the connecting link between New Testament times and our own. Let us now try another argument. In the primitive church, people were immersed naked, therefore John the Baptist and the apostles immersed people naked, therefore the baptists ought to immerse people naked. Again: The primitive church baptized in private, therefore John the Baptist and the apostles baptized in private, therefore the baptists ought to baptize in private. The same remarks might be made with respect to the unction and many other superstitious ceremonies, which were as certainly practised in the primitive church as was immersion.

After all, it will admit of doubt, whether the baptisms of our brethren amount to much more than our sprinklings. Our Lord required the ministers to baptize the people, not the people to baptize themselves.

Baptism, our friends say, implies a total immersion. If so, then ministers must put the whole body under water. Instead of doing this, however, their candidates walk into the water and immerse themselves nearly up to the neck: the administrator merely finishes the business, by putting the head under water. Now where is the mighty difference between dipping the head, and applying water to it with the hand? The head is as completely washed by many of us, as it can be by our differing brethren.

As the baptists do not put the whole body of a candidate under water, they no more baptize him, than we do our subjects, if baptism be immersion, and if ministers, as Christ commanded, are to perform it. But, in fact, there are many ministers so weakly and infirm, that they have not strength to give total immersion to persons who are corpulent; and since the people are no more permitted by the command to baptize themselves in part, than to do it entirely, I cannot believe that our Lord required his apostles to put the whole body under water. Who could have given a complete dipping to Daniel Lambert?

CHAPTER III.

ON THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR BAPTISM.

"Go ye," said our Saviour to the apostles, "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.) Our baptist friends insist, that the apostles and first teachers, acting under this commission, baptized none but believers. On the day of pentecost, "they that gladly received the word," that is, they that believed, "were baptized." The eunuch said to Philip, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" And Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And he answered and said,

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he baptized him....When they," the people of Samaria, "believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women....And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." (Acts ii. 41; viii. 12, 37, 38; xviii. 8.)

Neither these texts, nor any others, say that none are to be baptized but believers. They are mere examples of believers' baptism. I have baptized several believers; and the history of our missions will furnish thousands of examples of the same kind; but it never occurred to us, that this practice made the baptism of infants unlawful. These texts make no mention of children, neither in favour of their baptism, nor against it. If, in relation to the little ones, other passages bear a smiling aspect, I hope the above will not be brought to frown them out of countenance.

To argue from what is said of adults, to the case of children, is absurd. The commission of our Lord will furnish a much stronger argument against the salvation of all infants, than against their baptism. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In the order of these words, faith is put before salvation, as well as before baptism. If it be a good consequence, therefore, that infants ought not to be baptized, because they cannot believe, it will equally hold, that they cannot be saved, because they cannot believe; for faith is made as necessary to salvation, as it is to baptism. Let us now look at the other side of the proposition. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Infants cannot believe, therefore all who die in infancy shall be damned. Where is it said, "He that believeth not, shall not be baptized?" No such texts can be found. The words therefore supply a much stronger argument against infant salvation, than against infant baptism. Our Lord, in his preaching, restricted salvation to believers. "He that believeth not is condemned....He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." For

one text where faith and baptism are connected together, it would be easy to produce twenty where faith and salvation are united. The baptists admit there are other texts which prove the salvation of infants; and they do not pretend that such texts contradict the above; why then do they oppose to the evidence we adduce in favour of infant baptism, such texts as speak of faith in adults?

The apostle says, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha." Infants do not love Christ; are they therefore accursed? "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance on all them that obey not the gospel." Infants do not obey the gospel; will they then be the objects of his vengeance? The apostles had no right to compel people to attend their ministry; has a parent, therefore, no authority over his child, to subject it to christian instruction? The apostles were not authorized to administer corporal chastisement to those who refused to obey their precepts; does it follow, that a parent may not correct a disobedient child?

I hope I have said more than enough to show, that, if other texts favour infant baptism, those under consideration do not oppose it. Let us proceed to inquire into the nature of that faith which some adults possessed at the time of their baptism. I think this will go a long way towards settling the controversy, as to the subjects of the ordinance. The baptists generally, I believe, understand it of justifying, or saving faith. Hence their candidates are required to give an account of their religious views and experience. If this prove satisfactory, they are admitted to the ordinance; but if they are supposed to be erroneous in some important article of faith, or to be destitute of the evidences of a work of grace upon the heart, they are usually rejected. I say usually; for I am aware there are a few churches which admit members on easier terms. Let us compare this, with what we find recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

The three thousand who were baptized on the day of pentecost, were unquestionably believers; this we gather from the circumstances recorded; and by a careful examination of these, we shall be able to ascertain the nature of their faith.

1. A great number of these converts were foreigners, "Parthians, Medes, and Elamites," etc. (Acts ii. 8—11.) They were come to Jerusalem to keep the feast of pentecost. As they resided in countries where the gospel had never yet been preached, the sermon of Peter was most probably the first christian discourse they heard. The point which the apostle laboured to prove in this sermon, was, the messiahship of Jesus; and he concluded it with these remarkable words: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The proof which he adduced of this great truth wrought conviction in their minds. "When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were convinced that Jesus, whom their nation had put to death, was the Messiah; and it was this which caused their alarm. In his sermon, the apostle did not so much as touch upon any of the peculiar doctrines of christianity; the christian faith of many of these converts, therefore, could not be extended beyond this one article, that Jesus is the Messiah. Without putting a single question to them respecting either faith or experience, the apostle exhorted them to be baptized; for in answer to their inquiry, "What shall we do?" he immediately replied, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

It is added, "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." In these "other words," some have thought he gave them a summary of chris-

tian doctrine. Suppose he did, yet these "many words" followed the direction to be baptized, and this will materially strengthen my argument; for it will then appear, that, on the people being convinced of the messiahship of Jesus, the apostle exhorted them to be baptized, even before he had submitted to them a summary of the christian system. But we are told the substance of these "many words:" "Saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation." Save or separate yourselves. They were exhorted in many words to separate themselves from a wicked world, and to enter into the communion of saints; and the rite by which they were to pass over from the world into the church was baptism. And that they understood the apostle's exhortation to refer to this ordinance, seems to be certain, because it is immediately added, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." The apostle had before told them that, on being baptized, they should receive the remission of sins. They were glad to hear of salvation; and they entered into the church by baptism, in order to enjoy it.

2. These persons had not justifying faith previous to their baptism; because they were exhorted to "be baptized, for the remission of sins." Those who are justified, are pardoned; if, therefore, they had justifying faith, they had forgiveness also, before they received the ordinance; how then could they be baptized for the remission of sins? Here the baptists flatly contradict the apostle. They say we must be justified, or pardoned, in order to be baptized; he says, we must be baptized in order to be pardoned; they contend for salvation out of the church, he contends for salvation in the church. Here, then, we produce no less than three thousand examples in direct opposition to the favourite sentiment of the baptists, that no person is entitled to the ordinance who does not give credible evidence of justifying faith.

If this passage cannot be made to bend to the prac-

tice of the baptists, their cause is lost. Accordingly, one writer states, that "baptism is to the believer, a joyful pledge of the remission of sins." If he mean, a pledge that his sins shall be forgiven him, I have no objection; but in that case, he is not pardoned prior to baptism, and, therefore, does not possess justifying faith as a qualification. If he mean, a pledge of his being already in a pardoned state, it is not true in the case of Simon Magus, and all similar instances; and the sentiment is big with delusion, as tending to cherish false hopes of a state of acceptance. Another writer says, "It is on account of its symbolical meaning, that baptism is so frequently spoken of as taking away sin. Peter, when addressing those Jews who were converted under his ministry, commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins; because baptism exhibits an impressive image of that purification by the blood of Christ, which they enjoyed through faith in his name." If Peter exhorted his hearers to receive the ordinance on account of its being a pledge of their previous justification, and an impressive image of the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ which they already enjoyed, how could he urge them to be baptized for the remission of sins? Ought he not rather to have said, "Because your sins are forgiven you?" But in the same breath he exhorts them to repent; and could they be in a pardoned state before they commenced the work of repentance? Ananias exhorted Paul to be baptized, and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. That baptism may be a figurative representation of the washing away of sin, and a pledge of the Lord's willingness to pardon, I do not deny; but in the case of Paul, baptism is urged as a means of obtaining forgiveness; and since that alone would not avail, he is directed to use another means along with baptism, namely, calling upon the name of the Lord. If he already enjoyed forgiveness, and only wanted the pledge and impressive image of it, what was he to pray for? Ananias, it seems, could give

him these, by baptizing him; but Ananias knew he could not give him the thing signified by baptism; he could only wash the body; God must wash away sin: and his praying to God to do this, while he used the outward sign, is demonstrative proof, that neither he nor Ananias had any notion of the remission of sins being a necessary qualification for the ordinance.

3. These candidates had no christian experience. It is true repentance is placed before baptism: "Repent and be baptized." But they could not have made much progress in repentance previous to the administration of the ordinance. Instead of waiting till they brought forth the fruits of repentance in their lives, and thus gave evidence of a work of grace upon their hearts, they were added to the church "the same day," they were convinced. The morning was far advanced when the sermon was ended, and several hours would be occupied in performing the rite upon so many; the work of baptizing, therefore, must have commenced immediately, and repentance would succeed to it.

"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. They were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins....I indeed," says he, "baptize you with water unto repentance." (Mark i. 4, 5; Matt. iii. 11.) The baptism of John, like that of Christ, was for the remission of sins; justifying faith, therefore, was not a necessary preliminary to it. John baptized them unto repentance. Their reception of the ordinance laid them under an obligation to repent. That John did not require the practice of repentance, as a necessary qualification for his baptism, is pretty clear, because, (1.) When the pharisees and sadducees came to his baptism, he said, "Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance—I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance," etc. From which it appears that he actually baptized them, and at the same time warmly admonished them to reform their manners. (2.) Most of those who came to John

for baptism, were entire strangers to him; he, therefore, could possess no means of knowing whether or not they brought forth the fruits of repentance in their lives.

On the day of pentecost, the greater part, if not the whole of the three thousand, must have been unknown to the apostles. Suppose an hour elapsed, and that is about all the case will admit of, between their conviction and the commencement of their baptism, what satisfactory evidences of a work of grace could they exhibit in so short a period, to persons who knew absolutely nothing of their past character and conduct? Like John's disciples, they were baptized unto repentance, and for the remission of sins.

Further. Those can have no christian experience who have not received the Spirit of God; and he is not promised to qualify for baptism, but as a prime privilege of the church subsequent to it. "Be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Some suppose that the extraordinary, and not the ordinary, gifts of the Spirit are here intended. The apostle, I think, has left no room for doubt; because he immediately adds, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off; even as many as the Lord our God shall call." God has not promised the miraculous gifts of the Spirit to all whom he should call to embrace christianity; the ordinary moral influences of the Spirit must, therefore, be intended. What religious experience could those people give in, who had only commenced the work of repentance an hour or two before; and who had neither received the forgiveness of sin, nor the renewing of the Holy Ghost? Would the baptists administer the ordinance, immediately, to a crowd of strangers, who might be brought under serious impressions at their meeting? Would they, without waiting awhile, add such to their church? Most certainly they would not.

What faith had the apostle Paul previous to his baptism? We may be pretty certain so bitter a persecutor had not studied christianity prior to his conver-

sion. According to his own confession, his zeal against this new religion proceeded from his ignorance of it: "I did it ignorantly, and in unbelief." The glorious appearance of our Lord to him, convinced him that he was the Messiah. The first christian instructor who visited him after this event, was Ananias; who, as soon as introduced to him, laid his hands on him, "and immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." (Acts ix. 18.) He was baptized, therefore, previous to his being instructed in the doctrines and duties of christianity; and his faith in the messiahship of Jesus, prior to his reception of the ordinance, was not justifying, because he was encouraged to look for the forgiveness of sin in the use of the rite, as has already been remarked. "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii. 16.) Here, then, as on the day of pentecost, instruction, pardon, and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, were to follow baptism, not to precede it, and qualify for it.

Philip introduced the gospel into Samaria. And "when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." (Acts viii. 12, 13.) The faith of the Samaritans, prior to baptism, was not justifying. For, 1. It is said of Simon Magus, that he believed also; but instead of being in a state of justification, an apostle pronounced him to be "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." 2. They did not receive the Holy Spirit till some time after baptism: "For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Verse 16.) For reasons already assigned, the ordinary gifts of the Spirit would be conferred on this occasion, as well as the extra-

ordinary ; and they could not possess justifying faith, before they had received the gracious influences of the Spirit of God.

The same chapter contains the account of Philip preaching to, and baptizing, the Ethiopian eunuch. This man knew nothing of christianity, till Philip "preached unto him Jesus." Under this sermon, which was delivered as they rode together in the chariot, he became a believer in the divine mission of our Lord ; and on their approaching some water, he desired to receive the ordinance. "Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he baptized him." (Acts viii. 35—38.) He was not questioned upon any subject besides his faith ; and his confession contained only this one article, the messiahship of Jesus : "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Here is not a word respecting the peculiar doctrines of christianity, his own personal saving interest in Christ, or a work of grace upon his heart.

The jailer at Philippi must have been perfectly ignorant of christianity before the apostle preached in his house. Under the greatest terrors of conscience, he inquired of Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in the house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he, and all his, straightway." (Acts xvi. 30—33.) The substance of what Paul and Silas spake to this man and his household, is not stated ; but when we reflect that in every instance recorded in the Acts, where the discourses of the apostles were addressed to persons ignorant of Christ, the object aimed at was to produce a belief of his divine mission,—we have no reason to think that the men of God, in this instance, departed from their general practice. There was not time, besides proving the messiahship of Jesus, to in-

struct them in the doctrines and duties of christianity, previous to baptism ; because they were baptized " the same hour of the night " in which the earthquake took place. The Spirit of God can, no doubt, communicate much truth to the mind in a very short period ; but in the instance before us, human agency was employed : — the apostle spake unto him the word of the Lord. Some time must have elapsed after the earthquake, before the household could be brought together, and be sufficiently composed to attend to the apostle's discourse ; and a part of the hour must also have been taken up with washing the stripes of Paul and Silas, and administering the rite. When these things are taken into the account, we cannot allow more than half an hour for instruction ; and how even an apostle could, in so short a time, besides proving the divine mission of Christ, explain the whole scheme of christian doctrine, exceeds my powers of comprehension. After his resurrection, our Lord was " forty days " with the apostles, " speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." (Acts i. 3.) If it required forty days for Christ to explain his religion fully to the apostles, in addition to all the instructions he had given them previous to his crucifixion, how could an apostle make an ignorant and brutal heathen acquainted with the whole of it, in less than forty minutes ? His faith could scarcely embrace another article besides the divine mission of our Lord.

And what evidences could this man exhibit of a genuine work of grace upon his mind ; when his piety, supposing it to be real, was not of an hour's standing ? If modern caution in the admission of members into the church be praiseworthy, the conduct of Paul and Silas on this occasion betrayed a censurable precipitancy. Though it was the midnight hour, his baptism is not deferred till daylight. How astonishing !

When the apostle Paul visited Ephesus, he found about twelve disciples who had received the baptism

of John. "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts xix. 1—6.) So, it seems, as soon as they heard of Christ, they received baptism. Here was no delay. And yet they were so exceedingly ignorant, that before this time they had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Their faith prior to baptism, therefore, does not appear to have embraced any other subject than the mere messiahship of Jesus.

After their baptism, "Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." To speak with tongues was miraculous. To prophesy, according to the apostle's explanation, 1 Corinthians xiv. was to "speak to men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.... Prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." To prophesy then was to speak to the church in an edifying manner. In his epistle to this church, the apostle evidently alludes to this effusion of the Spirit, and makes some remarks which will throw considerable light upon it. "In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." (Ephes. i. 13, 14.) This unquestionably refers to their first reception of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in Acts xix.; and clearly proves that they received his ordinary gifts. They received the Holy Spirit as a seal, which put them in possession of all spiritual blessings in Christ; and as an earnest, or foretaste, of the heavenly inheritance. This would fill them with holy joy; and they would naturally give vent to their pious feelings, by speaking one to another in an edifying manner, which Luke in the Acts

calls prophesying. Here again the ordinary gifts of the Spirit, and religious experience, are subsequents of baptism, not qualifications for it.

"Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." (Acts xviii. 8.) The question is, What did they hear and believe, prior to their baptism? The only information we have as to what they heard, is contained in verse 5, and that relates solely to the messiahship of Jesus: "Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ." This was what they heard, and, of course, what they believed. The baptists' argument is founded on the order of the words: faith is put before baptism. Now I will prove in the same way, from the apostle's epistle to them, that though they believed, they were not justified, before baptism. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 11.) The washing cannot mean their sanctification, because that is spoken of just after; it must refer to baptism. In this order, the ordinance is placed before justification. By baptism they were initiated into the church; in the church they were set apart, (which is what the word sanctified means,) to the service of the Lord Jesus; and in the use of the means of grace instituted in the church, they obtained justification. Thus the order of the words agrees with the order of things.

The case of Cornelius and his friends, recorded in Acts x. must now be considered. Here is an instance, and the only one to be found in the New Testament, of the Holy Spirit being given before baptism; but a very obvious reason appears for this singular incident, in the circumstances connected with it. This was the opening of the gospel dispensation to the heathen world; it was the first congregation of gentiles to whom an apostle had preached. The Jews conceived that social intercourse with uncircumcised gentiles would pollute them; and the apostles were full of this prejudice. Peter was cured of it, by the vision of the sheet let down from heaven; but though this removed the

scruples of himself, and the brethren who accompanied him from Joppa, they had no idea that the gentiles ought to be admitted to the privileges of the gospel, without circumcision. Accordingly we find that "they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." Here God specially interposed, and taught the Jewish christians that the gentiles were to enjoy the privileges of christianity, without being subjected to circumcision and the law of Moses.

As soon as the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem heard of this affair, they called Peter to account. "And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning," and having related how the Holy Ghost fell upon the people, while he was speaking to them, he concluded with remarking, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts xi. 1—18.)

A council was afterwards held at Jerusalem upon this subject; for "certain men came down from Judea, and taught the brethren, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. . . . And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the

neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they." (Acts xv.) After a few remarks from Barnabas and Paul, to the same effect, the assembly determined, that the gentiles should have the gospel free from any ceremonial adulteration.

In the instance under consideration, God, it is very manifest, departed from the usual order, to convince the Jews, that the gentiles ought to be received into the church without any mixture of Judaism. This matter being settled, things went on in the regular course, not another example of the same kind can be given. What, therefore, some of our baptist brethren have taken for a general rule, is marked by the sacred writer as an extraordinary case, and is no more than an exception to the general rule; the regular order being, as we have seen in many cases, for the pardon of sin, and the gift of the Spirit, to succeed to the ordinance.

The way seems now to be prepared for a consideration of our Lord's commission, as given in Matthew xxviii. 19, 20. "Go," says he, "and teach all nations, baptizing them....and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Teaching is here placed both before and after baptism; but the Greek terms differ; the former being *matheteusate*, the latter, *didaskontes*. The critics are pretty generally agreed, that *matheteusate* signifies "to proselyte," or "disciple." Turretine remarks: "The word which Christ here uses, does not so properly signify to teach by preaching, as to make disciples, which may be done by baptism, it being a sacrament of initiation. Thus John iv. 1, *mathetas poiein*, is not simply 'to teach,' but 'to make disciples;' and to introduce into a professional state of discipline, as among the Jews, persons were often made disciples, not as already taught, but in order to be taught. Thus a gentile addressed Hillel, Make a proselyte of me, that thou mayest teach me. And that the word is so to be under-

stood here, is demonstrable from the word, afterwards, rendered teaching, which appears tautological, unless the first word refers to something more than that."*

Doddridge renders it, "Proselyte" all nations; Campbell, "Convert" all nations; Wesley, "Disciple" all nations. The marginal reading is, Make "disciples" or "christians," of all nations. There is allusion in this reading to Acts xi. 26: "And the disciples were called christians first at Antioch." The word christian, therefore, is of exactly the same import as the word disciple; consequently the command to disciple all nations, means, to christianize all nations. And this was to be done by, 1. Baptizing them; and, 2. Teaching them. The first is a general term, informing the apostles what they were to do; they were to make disciples or christians. The two other terms, are the particulars included in the general term, and direct them how to execute their mission; namely, by baptizing and teaching.

We do not, then, deny that the word *matheteusate* includes in it teaching; but we contend that it includes in it baptizing also; and the commission places the ordinance before the instruction.

The only text which the baptists produce to prove that baptism is not included in discipleship, is John iv. 1, 2. "When therefore the Lord knew how the pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judea." etc. To make disciples, and to baptize them, are here, we are reminded, represented as two different actions.

The report of our Lord having made many disciples, was what gave offence to the pharisees; and the mention of their baptism seems to have been added to the report, merely as a confirmation of it. In this view, the statement respecting baptism is exegetical, and the conjunction has the sense of *even*. "The pharisees heard that Jesus made, even baptized more disciples than John."

* *Turretini Theologia*. See Miller's Catholic Baptism, p. 33.

Our Lord's fleeing from Judea into Galilee, is a proof that he was alarmed for his personal safety. The pharisees were the enemies he dreaded; and the reason which the text assigns for their hostility, is the information they had received, "That his disciples were more numerous than those of John." The business of the informers employed by the pharisees, was not to inquire how our Lord treated his disciples; for in that case they must have been apprized of his teaching them; and as teaching is of much more importance than baptizing, it would surely have been noticed in the report, had the object of the informers been to find out what course the Saviour took with his disciples.

Baptism is evidently mentioned in this passage, merely because it was considered as the criterion of discipleship. The persons employed by the pharisees had to ascertain whether the disciples of our Saviour were numerous or not. In prosecuting their inquiry, it would be necessary for them to fix upon some distinctive mark or evidence of discipleship; and what could this be, if not baptism? They could not judge of the number of disciples, by the numbers that attended his ministry; for in many parts of the gospels, the multitudes which thronged him are distinguished from the disciples; and many who heard him were excited by curiosity, returned home disgusted, and were never classed by either friends or enemies among his disciples. The informers had learned that all our Lord's disciples were baptized; and as they understood he baptized more persons than John, they concluded his disciples were more numerous.

But let us suppose the reporters meant to be understood, that Jesus made people disciples before he baptized them. What was the character of the persons who gave the pharisees this wonderful piece of information? We ought to be satisfied of their inspiration, before we credit their report. "The pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized," etc. And was everything true which the pharisees heard? If all the

reports were true which were put into circulation respecting our Lord, what opinion must we form of him? Some of these reports were, that he was a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber; that he had a devil, and was mad. The spies and informers employed by the pharisees, are not entitled to the implicit confidence of christians. And it is remarkable, that this report is noted by the apostle as incorrect; no doubt with a view to warn his readers against building christian doctrines upon every tale which was whispered in the ears of enemies. The report says, that Jesus baptized his disciples. The apostle says, "Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples." No inspired person ever speaks of disciples being made, before they were baptized. The apostle John, in this text, instead of saying, as the informers did, that disciples received the ordinance, asserts the direct contrary,—that they gave it.

It is not from this text, so much as from John iii. 22, 26, we infer, that so many did not receive the ordinance from John the Baptist, as from the disciples of Christ; and as the latter text represents the people in vast numbers flocking to Christ for the ordinance, of whose previous discipleship or instruction, there is neither any indication nor any probability, the natural inference is, that they were placed in the relation of disciples by baptism, and then taught. (Mark iv. 34.)

When our baptist friends contend for people being made disciples before they are baptized, they ought to explain to us what it is which constitutes a man a disciple. Wherein did the discipleship consist of the three thousand on the day of pentecost, previous to their baptism? Our brethren insist upon it, that, according to the commission, the apostles were to make disciples by teaching; and after they were thus made, they were to be baptized. Addresses in proof of the messiahship of Jesus, similar to the discourse of Peter on the day of pentecost, are of frequent occurrence in the New Testament; but not one of them is ever styled teaching. We will, however, for the present

admit, that Peter taught them. Did that teaching constitute them disciples? Then those who refused baptism were disciples as well as those who received it; for both parties heard the whole address of the apostle, as is manifest from the remark at the close of it: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." The address no doubt persuaded the three thousand to become disciples by baptism; but if they were disciples before baptism, and the teaching of the apostle constituted them such, then those who declined the ordinance, being the subjects of that teaching, must be recognized as disciples also; and yet this is impossible: the premises, therefore, must be given up.

Some perhaps, will place their discipleship in their gladly receiving the word. But this does not help the matter; because the apostle exhorted them to be baptized, before he had spoken a word to gladden their hearts. It was when they were overwhelmed with horror on perceiving they had murdered their Messiah, and in despair inquired, "Men and brethren what shall we do?" that he exhorted them to repent and be baptized. He would exhort none to receive the ordinance but proper subjects of it; and if none are proper subjects of it, according to our brethren, who are not disciples, it must follow, because they were exhorted to be baptized before they gladly received the word, that they were disciples before they gladly received the word; their discipleship, therefore, must have consisted in something else than a joyful reception of the truth.

To receive the word gladly, our brethren affirm, is the same as to believe. Very well; then these people were exhorted to be baptized, before they believed: how, therefore, can faith be a qualifying condition of baptism?

I know the baptists consider a believer and a disciple as the same; but this is not correct. "Among the chief rulers many believed on him: but because of the pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be

put out of the synagogue : for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John xii. 42, 43.) No one takes these believers for disciples. And in John vi. 60 — 66, we read of many disciples who believed not. What then becomes of the favourite sentiment of our differing brethren, that to disciple the nations, is to make them believers; when we have examples of many believing, who were not disciples, and of many being disciples, who were not believers ?

On the day of pentecost the apostles opened the commission they had received of the Lord. When we are disputing respecting the import of the commission, ought we not to examine how they interpreted it by their subsequent practice ? They did not, we have seen, make the people disciples, nor put them under a course of instruction in the nature of christianity, nor require them to believe, before they baptized them. On the other hand, we find, in strict accordance with the interpretation of the commission here contended for, they gave the ordinance to all who were willing, and as soon as they were willing ; they promised pardon and holiness as subsequents of it, not requiring the experience of these blessings as qualifications for it : and they taught them the apostolic doctrine, and admitted them to all the means of grace, (Acts ii. 41, 42,) after baptism, and not before it.

How are we to know, in many places where we read of disciples, whether they were baptized or not, if we are not to infer their baptism from their discipleship ? Our brethren have disciples, that is, persons under instruction among them, for ten or twenty years, before they give them the ordinance. The apostles never deferred it for a day. It is very evident to me, from the conversation which Paul had with the disciples at Ephesus, that the apostles inferred baptism from discipleship. When he arrived in the city, he " found certain disciples." He inquired whether they had received the Holy Spirit ; and being answered, that they had never heard a word upon the subject, he asked with surprise, Unto what then were ye baptized ?

He took it for granted they had received the ordinance. On what ground could he do this? It was certainly not their attainments, either in knowledge or grace; for they unhesitatingly confessed their perfect ignorance relative to the only point upon which he had examined them: as to a gracious influence, they declared they had never heard of such a thing! Now I will put it to any impartial person to determine, whether, upon the supposition that the apostles required the same qualifications for the ordinance which the baptists do, Paul could have assumed their baptism, after such an exposure of their total want of christian knowledge? There was nothing from which he could deduce it, but their being called disciples. He was mistaken in believing them to be the disciples of Christ; they were the disciples of John, and had received his baptism. He informed them that Jesus was the Messiah; and "when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Ignorant as they were, here was no delay: instruction in the christian doctrine must, in this instance, have followed the rite. They could not be christian disciples before baptism, when we are informed they received the ordinance as soon as they heard of Christ. (Acts xix. 1—7.)

The case of these Ephesians is, to my mind, quite decisive, that baptism is necessarily included in the term disciple. For if the first christians were made disciples, and in this state of discipleship were carefully instructed in christianity, preparatory to the rite, the apostle instead of admitting the baptism of the Ephesians, as a matter of course, must, from the ignorance they manifested, have come to the opposite conclusion. His taking their baptism for granted, therefore, when he had no other reason for it than their discipleship, is conclusive evidence that he knew of no discipleship prior to the rite.

The baptists admit that *matheteusate* signifies "to make disciples." But they add, to make disciples by teaching; and we admit that teaching is included in the term. The points of difference are, 1. Whether

baptism be included in the term ; and, 2. Whether the teaching is to precede or follow baptism.

In opposition to the evidence adduced above, on the pedobaptist side of these questions, our differing friends appeal to Mark xvi. 15, 16. They insist that to "preach the gospel to every creature," means the same as to "disciple all nations." If this were true, all to whom our Lord preached the gospel, were disciplined by it ; but nobody believes this. Through the whole of John vi., and indeed, through the whole evangelical history, there is a marked distinction kept up between the multitudes who merely heard him preach and the disciples. The preaching of the gospel is undoubtedly one means of inducing people to become disciples ; but they must go further than hearing, or they will stop short of discipleship. Acts xiv. 21, we read : "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had (*matheusantes*) disciplined many, they returned again to Lys-tra." If preaching the gospel and discipling mean the same thing, what tautology is here ! That preaching of the gospel which is prior to baptism, is supposed by the baptists to be the teaching included in discipling. If so, this text might be read, "And when they had taught the city, and had taught many," etc. Nothing can be plainer than that two distinct acts are here intended. Their preaching in this place was, no doubt, the same as in other places, it went to establish the heavenly mission of Jesus. The hearers who were desirous of becoming christians, would be disciplined to Christ by baptism, and instruction in the christian system.

Hearing alone, it will probably be conceded, does not constitute men disciples. The evangelist Mark, it will be said, places preaching and faith before baptism ; and, therefore, it is not till they believe what they have heard, that they are disciplined, and entitled to the ordinance.

But it will follow from this, as we have noticed above, that those were disciples who believed in Christ, but did not confess him ; which I think no man can seriously believe.

The faith spoken of by Mark, it will, perhaps, be replied, is connected with salvation; and, therefore, must be of a higher and more spiritual kind than the faith of the chief rulers.

To settle this knotty point, the reader must observe, that let discipling mean what it will, it was a work which Christ commanded his ministers to do. If to disciple people, therefore, be to make them true spiritual believers, it is the duty of ministers to inspire their hearers with saving faith. Now did our Lord lay this injunction upon them? and can they comply with it, even if they would? Is not this kind of faith especially the gift of God? And it does not remove the difficulty, to say, that they may convey this faith as instruments; because this is not strictly correct: it is God who conveys the faith by them. They possess no authority or control over this faith; it is not subjected to their will; and the conveyance of it by their ministry forms no part of their duty. "The wind" of the Spirit "bloweth where it listeth." If the communication of saving faith were included in discipling, there would be as much propriety in commanding ministers to regenerate and purify the nations, as in the command to disciple them: instrumentally, they can convey holiness just as well as faith; but they are never required to do either.

It may be safely left with the reader to decide which interpretation of the word disciple is entitled to his preference. He must bear in mind, that to make disciples, is the work of ministers. They cannot give the nations justifying, saving faith; but they can baptize and instruct them.

Any one who compares the two texts, (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; and Mark xvi. 15, 16,) must perceive at once they are not exactly parallel, though it is easy to harmonize them. The duty of ministers is more fully laid down in Matthew than in Mark. In Matthew there are two duties enjoined upon them—to baptize and teach; and if the baptist opinion be correct, that

discipling is not a general term, including the other two, but a distinct and separate duty of itself, then three are enjoined. But in Mark only one injunction is laid on ministers, namely to preach. What the people are to do in order to be saved, is explained in the text in Mark, though Matthew is silent upon that subject. The point we are now discussing, is the nature and extent of ministerial duty; and as that is entered into more at large by the first of the evangelists than by the second, the second must be explained by the first, and not the first by the second. This commission is contained in Luke xxiv. 47, as well as in the two preceding evangelists, though more briefly than in either of them. Luke has omitted baptism entirely. If, therefore, you will allow of no interpretation being put upon Matthew and Mark, which is not expressly contained in Luke, there is an end of baptism, as a duty in ministers to give, or in the people to receive.

We admit preaching to be one method, and among heathen nations, to which the apostles were sent, a principal one of inducing people to become disciples; but if there are other methods, (and it will be shown presently there are,) the word in Matthew includes them all, while the word preaching, in Mark, does not, and cannot, exclude them. The just rules of interpretation require us to avoid putting a sense upon one of these words which contradicts the obvious meaning of the other; but they do not require us to consider them as of exactly the same import, for we know, in fact, they are not.

To make disciples, and to make believers, according to the baptists, is the same thing. Let us then take the subject upon baptist principles, and inquire, whether believers may not be made by other means besides preaching.

Great multitudes were induced to believe, in consequence of hearing of the miracles which were wrought by Christ and his apostles. When Peter had restored Tabitha to life, we read, "And it was known through-

out all Joppa: and many believed in the Lord." (Acts ix. 41, 42.) When Elymas the sorcerer was struck blind, "then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." (Acts xiii. 11, 12.) A great number of instances might be given.

If it be said, that miracles alone, without preaching, were not sufficient to make believers; I answer, suppose this be granted, it is equally certain that the preaching, without the miracles, would have made but comparatively few converts. But the conversions, in many cases, are attributed to the miracles. The miracle is the only reason assigned why many of the inhabitants of Joppa believed; and even this they did not see. Those who circulated the report of the miracle, would, of course, state that it was performed by Peter; that Peter was an apostle of Christ; and if the people did not know it before, they would soon learn, that Christ was the founder of a new religion. There was nothing like regular preaching in the whole business; there could be no particular statement of christian doctrine in the report; it was mere town-talk. Those who believed, would be baptized, and then instructed. Our Saviour depended more upon his miracles, than upon his preaching, for making converts. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." (John x. 37, 38.)

Conversation has been a means of making many proselytes. Andrew informed his brother Peter that he had found the Messiah, and brought him to Jesus. Peter believed, before he was instructed in the doctrine of Christ. Philip conversed with his friend Nathanael respecting Jesus being the promised Messiah, and introduced him to the Saviour. It was not a long sermon on the nature of christianity, but a single remark on quite another subject, which made Nathanael a convert to Christ. "Jesus said unto him, Because I

said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou ? thou shalt see greater things than these." (John i. 41—50.)

The woman of Samaria was proselyted by the conversation of our Lord. In this conversation there is not a word upon any doctrine of christianity ; and it is not probable he would have made the remark he did upon christian worship, had not the question of the woman led directly to it. What induced the woman to believe on him, was his relating to her some particulars of her past life, and not his preaching to her the everlasting gospel.

"The woman went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did : is not this the Christ ?" The gospel had never been preached in this city, (Matt. x. 5,) and there was nothing of the gospel in this speech of the woman ; and yet it was the means of making many converts. "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all things that ever I did." (John iv. 39.)

Many have become believers in answer to prayer. When our Saviour was about to raise Lazarus, he "lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always : but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." The prayer was answered. "Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him." (John xi. 41—45.) There was no preaching to the Jews on this occasion.

Multitudes have been converted in consequence of witnessing the holy lives of the saints. Our Lord prayed for the sanctification and union of his people, that their pious example might persuade the world to receive him : "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me....that the world may know that thou hast sent me." (John xvii. 21, 23.) Our Saviour

calls the disciples, "The light of the world;" and exhorts them, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The virtuous lives of the christians, and the constancy, patience, and joyfulness of the martyrs, have been the means of the conversion of millions.

Now, since the baptists grant that believers are disciples; and since the above instances prove incontestably, that believers may be made without preaching, and without being taught a single doctrine of christianity, besides the mere messiahship of Jesus; it necessarily follows, that when our Saviour commissioned the apostles to disciple the nations, he did not restrict them to preaching, or teaching, as the only method of doing it. And the above facts, against which there is no arguing, completely overturn what Mr. Booth and others have said on the word *matheusate*, that it means, to make believers by teaching, and that they cannot be properly made without it. Many of these believers knew no more than an infant does, of the nature of the christian religion. They had all to learn. As believers, the baptists will grant they were entitled to the ordinance; and according to the commission, they would be baptized, and then taught: "Baptizing them, and teaching," *didaskontes*, "them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

The amazing difference between what constitutes a believer, in the New Testament sense of the word, and what constitutes a believer, in the baptist sense of the word, has produced endless confusion on the subject of baptism. A believer, in the modern acceptation of the term, is a person who is well instructed in the doctrines, privileges, and duties of christianity; who adopts the doctrines as his creed, enjoys the privileges in his experience, and makes the duties the rule of his life. Now compare this believer with the believing Samaritans. It is expressly said, that they "believed on him." The reason of their believing on

him is also expressly stated, namely, "The saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did." Here was not a particle of information respecting the nature of the christian religion; it all related to the woman's past life; and was urged by her, in proof that Jesus was the Messiah. On the credit of her report they believed on him; but they could not possibly, at this time, know any of the particulars included in his mission. They could not have been previously instructed; because our Lord had forbidden his apostles to enter into any city of the Samaritans. (Matt. x. 5.)

If it be said, that, since they knew a Messiah was to come, (as appears from the speech of the woman to our Lord,) they might have received some correct ideas as to the nature of the religion he was to establish, though till now they were ignorant of his person; I reply, there is not one instance in the whole of the New Testament, of a person understanding the nature of the christian religion, before he was instructed by a christian teacher. The Jews believed the Messiah would live on earth for ever, (John xii. 32—34,) and establish a kingdom of this world; which ideas were in direct opposition to the doctrine of atonement through his death, and the spiritual nature of his reign. Even the apostles were not cured of these absurd notions till after his resurrection. (Luke xxiv. 21; Acts i. 6.) The Samaritans, therefore, though styled believers in Christ, knew absolutely nothing, at the time they received this designation, of the nature of his religion.

Those who were made believers without teaching, were just as fit for the ordinance, as those who received it, in consequence of believing the report of the apostles. The three thousand who were baptized on the day of pentecost, had no more knowledge or experience of christianity, than the Samaritans; and their faith is only inferred, while the faith of the Samaritans is expressed; as far, therefore, as qualifications are concerned, the latter have an evident superiority over

the former. Here, then, is a clear instance of persons being completely qualified for baptism, and, therefore, certainly entitled to it, who had never received a word of christian instruction. The baptism of infants seems to follow as a necessary corollary; for why should christian knowledge be required as a qualification in them, when it is dispensed with in adults?

Let it be conceded to the baptists, that people were made disciples before they received the ordinance; how is their cause helped by it? They admit, that disciples are commanded to be baptized; and we have given instances in abundance, of persons being disciplined and baptized in one day; and a few of both taking place in an hour. In point of time, therefore, the two are so closely connected together, that a single example cannot be found, of a person being styled a disciple, who had not received the initiatory rite.

But what is the true idea of discipling? A disciple is a scholar, a learner. To make a person a disciple, is to put him in a situation to be taught; to place him in a relation to Christ, as a learner to a teacher. The school of Christ is his church: it is here where the science of salvation is taught; and the rite of initiation into this school is baptism. An adult is not to be made a disciple by force; and there are various methods, as we have seen, of gaining his consent to enter into the church by baptism, that he may learn the christian doctrine. Some have been persuaded by preaching; others by miracles; others by conversation; others by prayer; and others by the holy lives of christians. When through any one or more of these means, a person became willing to learn the religion of Christ, he was made a disciple; that is, initiated into the school of Christ, by the instituted rite; and then treated suitably to the new relation in which he was placed, by being taught all things that Christ commanded.

In this view, the plain meaning of the word is regarded; and the explanation exactly harmonizes with

scripture facts ; whereas the baptists' explanation of the term stands in direct opposition to many of the plainest and most important facts in the Bible. When they say, for instance, that to make disciples, is to make believers, and to make them by preaching only, they contradict, as we have seen, three great truths.

1. That believers have been made without preaching.
2. That our Lord had disciples who were not believers.
3. That many believed on Christ who were not disciples.

A willingness to be instructed in christianity was all the qualification necessary to entitle a person to baptism. All who applied for the ordinance received it : we have no account of any one being refused. All who chose were admitted disciples, whether at the time of entering they believed or not.

With respect to infants and little children, the question is a very short one, and soon answered. Are the little ones to be taught christianity ? There can be but one answer to this, from christians. But the commission of Christ, and the practice of his apostles, place the ordinance before teaching. They must, therefore, be disciplined, that is, entered into the school of Christ, by baptism, in order to learn his doctrine. The consent of an adult is necessary ; but the consent of a parent is sufficient for a child ; the little one must be instructed in religion, whether he approve or not.

When the baptists contend that, to make a disciple, is to proselyte by instruction, they seem to forget that the word was in use among the Jews, who could not understand it in this sense exclusively. They prided themselves upon being the disciples of Moses. (John ix. 28.) How were they disciplined to him ? By circumcision. At what age ? When eight days old. Besides, gentiles were sometimes proselyted, or disciplined, to the Jewish religion ; and we know the invariable practice was, to disciple the children along with the parent. There cannot, therefore, be anything in the word itself, which excludes children. Jesus Christ, who gave the commission, and the apostles who re-

ceived it, were all Jews ; they had been the disciples of Moses ; and they were made such in infancy, as well as the rest of their nation. Since we have no notice of a new idea being affixed to the term by our Lord, we ought to interpret it in that sense in which a Jew would naturally understand it. We shall give examples in another place, of the infants and little children of believers, being called disciples.

Leaving this point for the present, we grant that preaching was one means employed to make disciples ; but here again, much confusion has been occasioned, by not attending to the difference between the public preaching of the apostles, and that which is practised among us. They preached to persons who did not believe in the divinity of our Saviour's mission : our hearers do believe in it. They had to prove this point ; and till this was done, it would have been highly improper to have gone into a detail of christian doctrine, and rested the proof on a, Thus saith the Lord, as we do. Our hearers admit the right of Christ to prescribe to us in religious matters ; hence we have only to show a scripture warrant for the faith and morals which we inculcate, and their authority, as binding on the conscience, is allowed and felt. But had the apostles gone upon this plan, in addressing people who disallowed the authority of Christ by which they acted, they would have exposed themselves to public ridicule and contempt.

But did not the apostles present to an unbelieving congregation, a statement of christian doctrine and duty, show the agreement of this with right reason, and, on this ground, require them to receive it as of divine authority ? No ; for then their preaching must have consisted of the enticing words of man's wisdom ; and the faith of their converts would have stood in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God ; the direct contrary of which was the fact. (1 Cor. ii. 1—5.) Instead of the apostles going forth upon the Socinian plan, exhibiting to Jews and heathens a scheme of christian faith and morals, adapted to the

corrupted reason of unbelievers, and begging of them to adopt it on the ground of its intrinsic merits, they merely stated a few of the principal facts relating to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and confirmed these, not by reasonings, but by miracles. "They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark xvi. 20.) Those who by the preaching and miracles of the apostles, were convinced of the heavenly mission of Jesus, and wished to be instructed in the whole system of christianity, were entered into the church by baptism, and then taught; according to the order of the divine commission, "Disciple them—baptize them—teach them all things."

When preaching to the unbelieving Jews, our Saviour confined himself principally to the evidences of his divine mission, which he drew sometimes from the Jewish scriptures, which prophesied of him, and sometimes from the miracles which he wrought; but he never, as far as I recollect, went into a detail of the particular doctrines and duties of his religion on these occasions. His sermon on the mount was addressed to disciples. "When he was set, his disciples came unto him; and he opened his mouth and taught them." So we shall find that whenever he develops the peculiarities of his religion, it is always to disciples.

It sometimes happened that Jesus preached to a mixed assembly of disciples and unbelievers. When this was the case, his discourses were generally parabolical; and were so managed, that his sceptical hearers could not comprehend his meaning. If his disciples did not understand him at these times, he explained the subject to them in private. "When he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve, asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them, that are without, all these things are done in parables. But without a

parable spake he not unto them; and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples. And the disciples came, and said unto him, why speakest thou unto them in parables? and he answered and said unto them, because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to them it is not given." (Mark iv. 10, 11, 33, 34; Matt. xiii. 10, 11.)

In proving the resurrection of Christ, the apostles proved the divinity of his mission; and they proved his resurrection by working miracles in his name. When Peter cured the lame man in the temple, he did it in the name of Christ, and preached to the wondering multitude, that God had raised him "from the dead, whereof, says he, we are witnesses. And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong." The apostle entered into no explication of the christian system: "Howbeit, many of them which heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." (Acts iii. 15, 16; iv. 4, 33.) Their mission to the world was to attest the resurrection of our Lord. "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." The public preaching of the apostle Paul related to this subject. "He preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. And confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ." (Acts ix. 20, 22.) A great number of instances might be produced, to show that the apostles, in their public preaching, confined themselves principally to the subject of the messiahship of Jesus; but instead of swelling the book with numerous quotations, I will cite only one more, which is given as a specimen of the general manner of the apostle Paul's preaching. "They came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this

Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ." (Acts xvii. 1—3.)

I cannot find a single instance in which either Christ or his apostles, in preaching to unbelievers, entered into any detailed account of the christian system; but I find much on the other side of the question. By the church, not the world, was known the manifold wisdom of God. (Ephes. iii. 10.) "The mystery which had been hid from ages, and from generations, is now made manifest to his saints. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. i. 26, 27.) The doctrines of Christ are food for the soul. The milk is given to babes, and the strong meat to them that are of full age, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Heb. v. 13, 14.) I have yet to learn that they took the children's bread and cast it unto dogs.

People were not, surely, required to qualify themselves for admission into the church, by a knowledge and experience of those truths which were communicated to none but actual members of it. In our day, a person may hear all the doctrines of the gospel, without being united to any church; but we have seen it was not so in the primitive times. In a country like this, however, in which there are many sects, and in which the inhabitants generally believe in the divine mission of our Saviour, I think it quite proper that the public ministry should be employed principally in explaining and enforcing all the particulars of our holy religion. In the present day, the New Testament is made public, and any one by reading it, though not a member of a christian church, may make considerable progress in the knowledge of Christ. But it was some time after the day of pentecost, before any part of the New Testament was written; and when written, it was not published to the world. The gospels and some of the epistles were composed for the use of all the

churches, in general; the other epistles were sent either to particular churches, or to particular individuals. These sacred oracles were preserved with the greatest care; and many suffered martyrdom, rather than give them up to their persecutors. In the primitive times, therefore, those who were out of the church, had no regular means of acquiring a knowledge of christianity.

This view of the subject will explain a seeming difficulty, that persons had faith, but were not justified, before baptism. "We are," says the apostle, "justified by his blood. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins." (Rom. iii. 25; v. 9.) Those who entered into the church, in consequence of believing in the divine mission of Christ, could only be justified and saved, by actually receiving the whole of christianity, as taught in the church. The doctrine of atonement, or justification through faith in the blood of Christ, was one of the doctrines taught in the church; and when a disciple was instructed in it, and in his heart believed it, he received justification. But had he, when made acquainted with this doctrine, rejected it, or explained it away, by substituting the word doctrine for blood, as many moderns do, his faith in the mission of Christ could not have justified him; because, he had rejected the only method of justification revealed under that mission. Simon Magus believed and was baptized; but he was not justified: he did not receive the whole of the gospel, as explained to him in the church; and an apostle pronounced him to be in the gall of bitterness.

Faith in the mission of Christ, prepared a humble disciple to receive the whole truth as it is in Jesus; and, therefore, though this general kind of faith did not save him, it put him into the way of salvation.

By believing the particulars included in the mission of Christ, he received justification, and every other gospel blessing. Too many in the present day satisfy

themselves with believing in Christ as a divine teacher, without actually receiving all the truths he taught; this is as inconsistent, as it is in a servant to acknowledge the authority of a master, and refuse to obey his commands.

To require of candidates for baptism a knowledge of the doctrines and duties of christianity, and an experience of its saving influences, is as contrary to common sense as we have seen it is to scripture. The church of Christ is frequently styled, "The kingdom of God." What earthly government makes the rights and privileges of subjects common to aliens? If any such government could be found, what inducement could aliens have to desire naturalization, and become fellow citizens with natural born subjects? There are numerous societies amongst men, the members of which enjoy special privileges. Those who wish to participate in the advantages enjoyed by such communities, must, of course, enter as members. The privileges of the kingdom, or church of God, are not ordinarily granted to those who are aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise; to be entitled to these, they must be incorporated fellow citizens with the saints, and received into the household of God. They are to be admitted into this spiritual kingdom, not because they do enjoy its immunities, but in order that they may enjoy them. They are not required to qualify themselves for the rite of admission into the church, by obtaining the remission of sins, and the gift of the Spirit; but they are required to be "baptized for the remission of sins," and that they may "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Christians are often called disciples, that is, learners, or scholars. The church of Christ is a school in which they are taught the science of salvation. How absurd it would be thought, if the rules of a certain college required of every pupil, before he entered, that he should know everything the professors could teach. The church is Christ's college; and pupils are

initiated by baptism : they enter, not because they are, but that they may be, made wise unto salvation.

All I contend for, however, and all my argument requires is, that what I have stated was the regular order. Under peculiar circumstances, I allow, a person might be admitted into the invisible, who was not united to the visible church ; so on the other hand, a person might be a member of a visible church, and be ever learning, yet never come to the knowledge of the truth.

The admission of persons into the church by baptism, immediately on their becoming willing, before they had received any knowledge of the christian system, or any experience of gospel grace, is perfectly inexplicable upon baptist principles. But the mystery is explained, when we consider, that the knowledge and salvation of Christ were communicated in the church, and not out of it. Upon this principle, it was of the utmost importance to lose no time. Hence, the three thousand who were first convinced on the day of pentecost, were that same day added to the church by baptism. Hence, the exhortation of Ananias, to Paul, as soon as introduced to him, " Why tarriest thou, arise, and be baptised." Hence the jailer and his family, were baptized straightway ; that is, immediately : though it was midnight when he was convinced, yet he was baptized that same hour of the night : the rite of initiation was not to be delayed an hour.

Let us now see how the argument will apply to the case of infant baptism. The qualifications for baptism, it is said, are,—

1. Repentance ; and infants cannot repent. But baptism was unto repentance, and it is sufficient, if repentance follow the rite. But waving that, repentance supposes sin ; and is sin a necessary qualification for the ordinance ? If infants cannot repent, they have nothing to repent of : if they have not repentance, they have innocence ; which, I think, is a pretty good substitute. The argument would equally apply against the baptism of our Lord. John's was

emphatically styled, the baptism of repentance; (which the christian baptism is not;) and yet though Jesus did not, and could not repent, he received the ordinance from the Baptist.

2. Knowledge and faith. More than enough has been said, in proof, that a knowledge of Christianity is not required as a qualification for the rite in an adult; the want of this knowledge cannot, therefore, disqualify an infant. It has been proved also, that baptism is to precede a course of christian instruction; and since infants are to be trained up in the correction and instruction of the Lord, it follows that they ought to receive the initiatory rite. The only question, therefore, is, whether the want of faith do not disqualify an infant? In adults, faith sometimes, I think generally, preceded baptism; but we have ascertained, that their faith was restricted to the mere messiahship of Jesus. It could not be reasonably expected, that the people would be willing to learn the christian religion, before they had satisfactory grounds for believing its author had a divine commission. The apostles therefore, very properly, applied themselves to the proof of this point. Multitudes on being satisfied that Jesus is the Son of God, became willing to receive instruction, in the nature of his religion, and received baptism as introductory to it; hence we read of many believing and being baptized. But it is quite natural to suppose, that some who doubted, or even disbelieved his divine mission, would be prompted by curiosity, or other motives, to desire a knowledge of christian doctrine: and as our Lord, as we have seen, explained the mysteries of his kingdom to none but his disciples, they would, of course, enter, with a view to get at these secrets. He initiated those by baptism, who came to him to be taught. (John iii. 26; iv. 1.) And as he had many disciples who believed not, and as he knew this from the beginning, (John vi. 60 — 66,) it is certain he did not make faith a condition of baptism; but gave the rite to all who were willing to receive it. And since faith was not required as a qualification in an adult, the

want of it cannot disqualify an infant. The consent of the parent is a sufficient reason for giving the ordinance to his children.

Let us illustrate the subject by an allusion to human science. A teacher of the mathematics, for instance, appoints a particular ceremony of initiation, to be observed by all who become his pupils. It is of importance to him, in order to obtain pupils, that he be able to produce sufficient testimonials as to his competence to teach the science; for without faith in his ability, many would be unwilling to put themselves under his instructions. But if he excited much attention in the neighbourhood, and professed to teach the science upon new principles, some would be induced to enter, who had no faith in his superior attainments. He would, of course, receive all who were willing to comply with his terms, whatever might be their opinion or faith respecting his professions. This is the order in reference to adults.

With respect to a child it is different. Will any one say it is unlawful to initiate a little one into a seminary of learning, without its free consent, and before it is capable of believing, and actually does believe, in the utility of the sciences taught, and in the ability of the master to teach them? It is surely the belief of the parent, not of the child, as to the value of learning, and the qualifications of a teacher, which must determine the points, as to the seminary into which it shall be initiated, and what it shall be taught. Now since the baptists admit that parents ought to correct and instruct their children in the Lord, whether the children consent or not, and before they are capable of forming a judgment on the divine mission of our Lord; they concede the main point in the argument, and what will entirely overturn all they can urge against infant baptism. The faith of a parent then, it seems, is a sufficient ground for his child being instructed in the Lord, but is not a sufficient reason, why it should be "baptized into" him! Can anything be more preposterous? A parent has a right to subject a child to the correction

and instruction of a school, but he has not a right to initiate it ! The want of the latter right, must annihilate the former. But if the former right can be maintained, the latter must necessarily be included in it. The order both of nature, and revelation, is, first to initiate a disciple, or scholar, and then instruct him ; not to instruct him first, and then initiate him.

Concede to a baptist, that justifying faith is spoken of in the New Testament as a qualification for baptism : and that the teaching mentioned in the commission of Christ, prior to baptism, imports instruction in the doctrines and duties of christianity ; and you grant him nearly all he wants. Infants, he argues, have neither knowledge, nor faith ; their baptism, therefore, ought to be deferred till they understand religion, and give credible proofs that they believe and experience it. This is the hinge upon which the controversy turns. If knowledge and grace ought to be taken into the church by every person when he enters ; then certainly infants ought to be kept out. But if, as I have abundantly shown, persons were admitted into the church by baptism, in order to be taught and purified, then infants ought to be baptized. If the baptists can produce one instance out of the New Testament of a person, old or young, being subjected to a course of christian instruction, as a qualification for baptism, I will give up this argument in favour of infants ; but if he cannot, the controversy is at an end ; for I have produced between three and four thousand instances, of persons being baptized the same day, and some of them the same hour of the day, on which they were convinced of the heavenly mission of Jesus ; and who had received no previous instruction in the particular branches of the christian system. Here, I might rest the cause, and drop my pen ; for if baptism is to precede an exposition of the doctrine of Christ, and if infants at one or two years of age, are to be subjected to the correction and instruction of the Lord, then they have an indisputable right to the ordinance.

The only text which makes faith a condition of

baptism is, Acts viii. 37 : "And Philip said," (to the eunuch,) "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" (be baptized). "And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The eunuch was an adult; and as far as this text is of authority, it only proves that a hearty faith in an adult is a necessary condition of the ordinance; but it concludes nothing against the claims of little ones. Here is the case of an individual adult; and it cannot be legitimately applied any further than to all adults, in similar circumstances.

Some baptists lay considerable stress upon the reply of Philip: "If thou believest with all thine heart," insisting that it must denote justifying faith, and that the ordinance is not valid without it. But if this interpretation be just, it will support another inference or two: if an adult at the time of receiving the ordinance have not justifying faith in his heart, his baptism is as completely null as that of an infant. It will not solve the difficulty to say, that the candidate professes justifying faith, and the minister must act on his profession; for Philip is not speaking of faith on the tongue, but of faith in the heart. If a man profess justifying faith when he hath it not, he tells a lie, and is more unfit than an infant is for the ordinance; for though they are both on an equality as to faith, yet the infant has the advantage as to truth. It must be extremely absurd, therefore, to consider the baptism of the hypocrite as valid, and that of the infant as void.

If a minister must act on the profession of an adult, it must not be forgotten, that a hypocrite sometimes betrays himself soon after the reception of the ordinance, as was the case with Simon Magus; and leaves no room to believe he was sincere at the time he received it. Now suppose this man afterwards to repent and become a true believer, is he to be subjected to the ordinance again? The practice of the baptist says, no. But if its being known that a man had not justifying faith when he received the ordinance, does not make it necessary he should receive it again; why

must a child be subjected to the rite again, merely because it is known he had not faith when he received it at first? The subject of the ordinance is supposed to be unfit in both cases, with this material aggravation in the case of the adult, that at the time of receiving it, he "spoke lies in hypocrisy:" how strange then to admit the validity of the rite in the worst case, and to nullify it in the other.

It will not clear up this affair to say, that the minister judged the adult to be a proper subject, and, therefore, the ordinance ought not to be repeated; because the same may be said on the other side of the question: we judge infants to be proper subjects; and we shall feel infinitely obliged to any one to show us how it is, that when a baptist minister performs a rite, under a mistaken notion as to the fitness of the subject of it, his act shall be valid; but that when another minister makes exactly the same mistake, his act is good for nothing.*

But the fact is, the eunuch's confession of faith contains only one article,—the messiahship of Jesus: "He answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." I dare say he believed this truth with all his heart; but if this be justifying faith, then the devil was justified; for he made a similar confession more than once.

The baptists argue from this text, as though no doubt existed as to its authenticity; and yet "almost all the critics declare against it as spurious. Griesbach has left it out of the text; and professor White says, 'This verse, most assuredly should be blotted out.'"[†] It has scarcely ever, I believe, been the case, that the spuriousness of any text has been so clearly established.

Having disposed, then, of this famous text, where is there another which requires faith as a condition of

* It is here granted, for the sake of argument, not as a fact, that a pedobaptist minister is mistaken as to the proper subjects of baptism.

† Dr. Adam Clarke *in loco*.

baptism? I know of none. For want of a better, a baptist will, perhaps, quote Mark xvi. 16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." No qualification for baptism is expressed in this text. It was proper enough to say, under the old dispensation, "He that believeth and is circumcised shall be saved." A baptist, I think, will not dispute this position; and he certainly will not infer from it, that an infant ought not to have been circumcised. I shall be glad, therefore, to be informed how it follows from the position of our Lord, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," that infants ought not to be baptized? The text does not contain a word or a hint respecting the qualifications for the rite, but merely states the terms of salvation.

This passage is connected with preaching. "Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth," etc. The preaching of the apostles related to the messiahship of Jesus, and all who believed this, and entered into the church by baptism, were entitled to all the privileges of the christian dispensation, both for time and eternity; which are summed up in the word salvation.* Hence the members of the church are so often said to be saved: for it was in the church only, that the doctrines of salvation were taught. "By grace ye are saved. Baptism doth now save us." Faith in the messiahship of Jesus, in order to save, in the sense here explained, must have been sincere; but it does not follow, that it was justifying of itself, without baptism. The three thousand on the day of pentecost sincerely believed in Jesus as the Messiah; but they were to be baptized, in order to receive forgiveness, and the gift of the Spirit. When faith in the messiahship of Jesus was sincere, it would induce the believer to receive the ordinance, and prepare him for the reception of the saving truths taught in the church. In this view baptism, in apostolic times, was as neces-

* Not, surely, without a full compliance with the terms on which salvation is promised to the members of the church of Christ.—EDIT.

sary as faith was to salvation ; and, therefore, we need not be surprised that our Lord has connected them together as the means of salvation. How was a person to attain gospel salvation without baptism, when the saving truths of the gospel were not ordinarily communicated to the uninitiated ?

But the qualifying terms of baptism is quite another question, upon which this text affords no light. From other texts we have learned, that some believed, (and their faith was true and good as far as it went,) who refused the rite ; and that others became disciples, and, therefore, were baptized, without possessing faith : neither of these classes could be saved. And if this text determines nothing as to the qualifications for baptism in an adult, it is certainly silent as to the fitness or unfitness of an infant. If infants ought not to be baptized, because faith stands before baptism, they cannot be saved, because faith stands before salvation.

The explanation which our baptist friends give of this text, reduces baptism nearly if not quite to a nullity. They say, the faith which precedes it is justifying, saving faith. If so, they may be saved just as well without baptism, as with it. It is of no consequence in this controversy, whether you understand the salvation as present, introductory to the future, or as the future salvation only. He who has justifying faith prior to the rite, has a present salvation without it ; and if he die in this state, he will have eternal salvation without it. To say that a person who is justified ought to be baptized, does not remove the objection ; because our brethren generally delay the ordinance for some time after justification ; and the candidate may die before he receives it. By removing baptism from the place it held in apostolic times, and, instead of making it the door of entrance into saving truths and privileges, placing it beyond them, it is reduced to a mere idle ceremony. Our baptist friends are perpetually reminding us, that it is a divine command, and, therefore, ought to be complied with, and

cannot be unimportant. But the importance of obedience depends partly, at least, upon its being performed in the prescribed order; or an act of duty may not only be useless, but sinful. The law of sacrifices, under the old dispensation, was as important as the law of baptism under the new; but when Saul presented his offerings to God at the time he ought to have been employed in moral obedience, instead of pleasing God, he sinned against him. (1 Sam. xiii. 12, 13; xv. 19—23.)

In Titus iii. 5, baptism is connected with salvation, as a means leading to it. "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Macknight, Clarke, and the critics generally, interpret the washing of regeneration, to mean baptism. It is here placed before the renewing of the Spirit, in the order of means which produce salvation; and this order, as we have shown, is supported by the practice of the apostles. Harmonize the two texts, and we have faith—baptism—the renewing of the Spirit—salvation. Here is another proof that the faith which precedes the ordinance is not justifying; because a person who is justified by faith is also renewed; but the rite is placed betwixt faith and the sanctification of the Spirit. And this arrangement of the apostle is not accidental, or out of the regular order; because in Ephesians v. 25—27, baptism is represented as one of the means of sanctification, which it could not be, if the sanctification of the Spirit preceded it. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church," etc. In this passage the order is, baptism—instruction in the word—sanctification—glorification, or eternal salvation. This representation exactly agrees with the preceding texts, and with the station and uses I assign to the ordinance; but it stands opposed to the baptists' interpretation of Mark xvi. 16.

Acts viii. 37, and Mark xvi. 16, are the only texts

produced in proof that faith is required as a qualification for baptism. The former is evidently spurious, and, therefore, of no authority; and the latter, instead of stating the terms of the ordinance, does not drop a hint on the subject, but merely states the terms of salvation. We are then fully warranted in drawing the conclusion, that justifying faith is never, in the Bible, made a qualifying condition of baptism; and this destroys the system of the baptists, root and branch.

But let us meet our differing brethren upon their own favourite ground of believers' baptism. We have ascertained the nature of that faith which believers had prior to the ordinance, and will now inquire at what age they may possess it.

Many children at three or four years of age are better acquainted with christianity, than most of the disciples mentioned in the New Testament were, previous to their baptism. Before this age, they have learned to answer a few of the easiest questions out of a short and plain catechism; and they believe what they are taught, on the testimony of their teachers and friends, as firmly as the Samaritans "believed the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ," on the testimony of Philip. They have, therefore, as much right, as the Samaritans had, to the ordinance. Put the question to a little child who has been instructed in the first rudiments of christianity, "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" and it will answer, without hesitation, in the affirmative.

It will, perhaps, be remarked, that though these little folks may believe as firmly as adults, their faith is not founded on the same rational and solid evidence. This I readily admit. But if we are to make no account of the faith of all those who do not believe in the divinity of our Saviour's mission, upon the best reasons that can be produced for it, I am afraid we shall exclude the greater part of even those who are looked upon, and surely justly so, as serious christians.

That faith is not the most esteemed by our Lord, which is built upon the highest evidence; but that which produces the greatest degree of virtue. "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John xx. 29.)

Upon the principle, therefore, of believers' baptism, many children of three years of age are entitled to the ordinance; and few pedobaptists, I believe, would think it worth while to dispute warmly for an earlier administration of the rite.

But can we find any of these little believers in scripture? Yes; in the following passage: "Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. It is not the will of your father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (Matt. xviii. 2—14.)

Some will, perhaps, maintain that, by little ones, in this passage, is meant adults, who resemble little ones in humility.

But the adults are not called little ones, but "as little children," and "as this little child." There is a clear distinction kept up throughout the passage, between the little children, and the adults who were to be like them. When our Lord says, "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me;" the objector would interpret it of an adult, resembling a

little child. But in the parallel passage in Luke ix. 48, it is said expressly, "Whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me." The "one such little child," therefore, must be interpreted of a little child literally.

The occasion of our Lord's discoursing with the apostles in this strain was, the dispute they had just had among themselves as to which of them should be greatest in his kingdom. He took a little child for his text, and preached from it to them. He informed them, that instead of being greatest in his kingdom, they could not enter into it at all, except they were converted and made humble as that child; and that those who were thus converted and humbled should be the greatest in it. He then impressed it upon their minds, that a very important part of their duty, as his ministers, consisted, not in a consequential parade among princes and nobles in an earthly court, but in receiving into his church, and training up for heaven, little children; an employment this which formed a striking contrast to their ambitious views. Our Lord taught them two mortifying truths, 1. That they must be like little children. 2. That they must receive, or take care of little children.

Having shown that the little one whom they were to receive, was a child literally; there is no room to dispute, but the little one mentioned just after, whom they were cautioned not to offend or despise, was also a child literally. Our Lord is showing the consequences of receiving and of rejecting a little child; but to say the one received is an infant, and the one rejected an adult, is to pervert the plainest words of scripture.

But what was the age of the child in question? I cannot say positively. It appears to have been very young, as our Lord held it in his arms while he lectured the apostles. "And when he had taken him into his arms, he said unto them," etc. (Mark ix. 36.) There is no probability, therefore, that its age exceeded three or four years; for it must have been very incon-

venient to have held a great boy in his arms, all the while he was delivering his discourse.

This little one our Saviour styles a believer, a believer in arms ! Who shall forbid water that these little ones should not be baptized, seeing they have received the faith as well as we ?

“ Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name.” To receive any one in the name of Christ, is to receive him because he belongs to Christ ; according to the explanation of Mark ix. 41. “ Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.” These little ones, then, had justifying faith ; they not only believed in Christ, but they belonged to him. In what sense can ministers receive them in their christian character, but as members of the church of Christ. If ministers receive them at all, it must be either into their houses, to give them temporal support, or into the church, to feed them with the bread of life ; few could afford to receive them in the former sense, but all may receive them in the latter.

Look at the tremendous fate which awaits those who offend, that is, cause to fall, one of these little ones. How dreadful !

We are cautioned against despising them, from the consideration that “ their angels do always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven.” In earthly courts, especially among the orientals, none are permitted to look up to the sovereign, but persons of the highest rank ; the angels, therefore, which behold the face of God, are those of greatest dignity in the celestial hierarchy. The argument is this : do not despise and reject these juvenile believers ; they enjoy the guardian care of the most exalted of the heavenly host, and, therefore, ought not to be beneath your notice ; if the chiefest of the angels are glad to attend them, see that ye do not despise them.

I should be sorry to displease, or grieve our baptist friends ; but I cannot forbear thinking that some of

them, at least, do not view little children with that tenderness and affection, which the Saviour of the world manifested on this and several other occasions. Our Lord is here speaking to the apostles as ministers of his kingdom. Do baptist ministers receive little ones in arms, as believers in Christ, and as belonging to Christ? Do they not rather reject them; and reject them as incapable, at present, of believing? Do they not sometimes speak of these little ones in terms which almost indicate that they despise them? Do they not profess to receive believers into their churches by baptism? How then dare they refuse baptism to those whom Christ himself requires them to receive in his name as believers? Let any one read the awful denunciations of our Lord, and then say, whether he who receives them into the church by baptism, or he who rejects them, has most cause for apprehension.

Circumcision was a sign of faith, and a seal of the righteousness, or justification, received through believing. (Rom. iv. 11.) Now this is more than is ever said of baptism; and, therefore, by the baptists' mode of arguing upon qualifications for the rite, the conclusion is much stronger against infant circumcision than against infant baptism. Circumcision could not possibly be a sign of an infant's faith, nor seal to it a justification of faith. This shows the absurdity of arguing from the case of adults to that of infants.

3. Confession of sins, it is said, was required of candidates for baptism; and as infants have no sin to confess, and could make no confession if they had, they ought not to be baptized. Christ had no sins to confess, and, of course, made no confession; yet he received the ordinance. And why may not infants receive it without confession of sin, as well as their Saviour? John nowhere requires confession as a condition of baptism. The facts merely are stated, that the people were baptized, and confessed their sins. Does any one suppose that John was their father confessor? The confession was undoubtedly made to that God against whom they had sinned; and whether this

took place before or after baptism, is a matter of no importance. If we may, however, lay any stress on the order in which things are related, the confession was subsequent to baptism: "They were baptizēd of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt. iii. 6; Mark i. 5.) The whole argument of the baptists for believers' baptism, is founded upon this order: "He that believeth and is baptized," etc. If they think this argument a good one, they ought not to deny us the benefit of it. At any rate, however, here is no proof that infants should be denied the ordinance.

4. It is argued from 1 Peter iii. 21, that the answer of a good conscience towards God was required of every candidate for baptism; and as infants are incapable of such an answer, they ought to be rejected. The text is, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." It does not appear that the answer of a good conscience toward God, was made a condition of the ordinance. He who has a good conscience toward God, is in a state of salvation; if the good conscience, therefore, was prior to the rite, the state of salvation connected with it, was also prior to it; and then it could not be true that we are saved by baptism. A little attention to the type will illustrate the antitype. Noah and his family were saved by the water of the flood. How? The water did not of itself save them, but mediately, by means of the ark which carried them safe on its surface. So the water of baptism does not of itself save us; but it is the means of initiating us into the gospel covenant; the prime privileges of which are, the pardon of sin, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit; (Acts ii. 38;) and he who enjoys these, has a good conscience toward God, and is saved. But as all who are baptized, do not secure to themselves the enjoyment of those high privileges, the apostle gives a caution against trusting to the water of baptism, when not followed by a holy life. To make a

good conscience a condition of baptism, is preposterous; because the administrator can have no certain knowledge of the state of a candidate's conscience: but to teach the inefficacy of the ordinance, when not followed by virtuous conduct, is both a rational and a christian doctrine. Now I should be glad to know how this militates against infant baptism? Were not the Jews taught, that circumcision could not save them without a good conscience? And did ever a son of Abraham conceive this doctrine was inconsistent with infant circumcision?

If we make a good conscience a necessary condition of baptism, how shall we know when the ordinance is validly administered? To say the administrator must be satisfied with the profession, is talking without book; for the apostle is not speaking of a profession to man, but of the answer of a good conscience to God; and no man can judge of that.

But suppose the baptists' interpretation of this text to be the true one, does it follow that those who have been baptized in infancy ought to be subjected to the ordinance again? If an infant has not a good conscience, it certainly has not an evil one. Many adults, however, like Simon Magus, go down into the water with a defiled conscience, and come up out of it more filthy than they entered. An infant is surely better qualified than such characters as these! If the want of a good conscience, therefore, nullify the ordinance to an infant, must not the same cause produce the same effect in an adult. Upon this principle it is not twice, nor half a dozen times washing, that would suffice for some people.

We have now gone through the objections against infant baptism, which are founded upon the qualifications supposed to be required of candidates for the ordinance, and have shown them to be of no weight whatever; but admitting they were really required, can it be proved to be impossible for a child of three years of age to be thus qualified? Let us attend, however, to the design of the ordinance. When the

true reasons of it are understood, all objections to the admission of infants will instantly vanish.

1. Baptism is the rite of initiation into the church. The three thousand who were baptized on the day of pentecost, were by that rite added to the church. (Acts ii. 41.) Are infants capable of church membership? The uniform practice of the church from the days of Abraham, is a sufficient answer to this question.

2. Persons were by baptism admitted into the church of God, that they might enjoy the privileges of the church; and the chief of these are, the forgiveness of sin, and the gift of the Spirit. "Be baptized for the remission of sin, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 38.) If infants do not want forgiveness at present, we need be under no alarm that they will have to wait long before they need this privilege. Baptism, according to the text, precedes pardon. And if I have any certainty that a particular and dangerous complaint will attack my child, I think it is quite as prudent to put it under the care of an experienced physician, some little time before the malady is expected to break out, as to defer the matter till the disease has nearly destroyed him.

That infants need the Holy Spirit will be denied by few; and that he is promised to them, is clear from Acts ii. 39. The preachers and hearers on this occasion were all Jews, and we know that covenant promises, made to Jewish children, included infants. This promise, therefore, could not be understood with an exception; as nothing of the kind is either expressed or hinted at. This passage will be considered more at large by and by. Now if people are to be baptized in order to receive the gift of the Spirit, and if this gracious gift be promised to infant children, then infant children ought to be baptized.

Our Saviour needed no more forgiveness than infants do, but like them he had a promise of the gift of the Spirit, and this was sufficient, without the other,

to entitle him to the ordinance. Accordingly, we find that, after his baptism, the Spirit of God descended upon him. As infants, therefore, are subjects of the promise of the Spirit, they are clearly entitled to the rite.

If any one should object, "But God cannot give his Holy Spirit to infants, without their being baptized?" I answer, he can; and I believe he will, in case a pious parent cannot get his child baptized; either because it is a child, or because some unscriptural conditions are required of him. The Jews, we have seen, intended to impose circumcision upon gentile converts. To convince them that the gentiles were to have the gospel without it, the Holy Spirit descended on the first gentile congregation before either the Jewish or christian rite was administered. When the question was debated in the council at Jerusalem, (see Acts xv.,) the apostle Peter referred to this case, as a proof that circumcision was superseded in reference to the gentiles; the council were of the same mind; and the question was set at rest. But as baptism is a purely christian rite, the apostle insisted that it should be administered, and for the very reason, that they had received the Holy Spirit. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

Suppose then, as the objector does, that God should give his Holy Spirit to an infant before it is baptized; does he think that a sufficient reason why its baptism should be deferred? The apostle assigns that as the reason why it should be immediately performed. No man must refuse water to those who have received the Holy Ghost. Here is a plain command to baptize certain persons. Who are they? infants, or adults? Perhaps both. But let us inquire into the reason of the command. These persons are commanded to be baptized, not because they are infants, or because they are adults, but because they have received the Holy

Ghost. This is the reason, and the only reason, which the apostle assigns for their baptism; and he plainly intimates that no man has a right to forbid the water to those, to whom God has imparted the Holy Spirit.

Now let those who ask for a command to baptize infants look at this argument. The Holy Spirit is promised to the infant children of believers; and all recipients of the Holy Spirit are commanded to be baptized; therefore the infant children of believers are commanded to be baptized.

Can any person discover a flaw in this argument? (1.) Does he doubt whether the promise of the gift of the Spirit made to children, includes infant children? The covenant promises made to Jewish children, had always been applied to them in their state of infancy; and on the ground of such promises, the Jews initiated their infants into the church. This had been their practice for near two thousand years. Now when a Jewish teacher informs a congregation of Jews, that the promise of the gospel covenant belongs to their children, as well as to themselves, is it conceivable they should interpret his language as excluding their little ones, when there was nothing more firmly established amongst them, than the belief, and the practice founded upon it, that all similar promises had always included their infant offspring? And that meaning which the teacher knew his hearers would attach to his words, must have been the sense he intended to convey. (2.) The recipients of the Spirit are commanded to be baptized; and because they have received him. No one who regards the authority of scripture will dispute this point for a moment.

Here, then, we take our stand. Infants, equally with adults, are included in the promise of the Spirit; they are, therefore, equally with adults, commanded to be baptized.

Should it be objected, that we have no account of any infants being present when this command was

given ; I answer : supposing none were present, this does not affect the argument. We are not informed of the age of any one of the parties : the command is not founded upon their age, but upon their being the subjects of a divine influence, and when we have proved that children are the subjects of this influence, we have proved that they are just as much included in the command as their parents.

But there is strong presumptive evidence of the presence of infants on this occasion. When the angel directed Cornelius to send for Peter, he remarked, " He shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." It will be proved in the proper place, that the word *oikos*, here rendered " house," denotes a family of children. As all his children were specifically and savingly interested in the apostle's message, we may be sure he would take care to have them all present. Besides, if his children had not been mentioned by the angel, we cannot suppose he neglected them, when we are expressly told, " He called together his kinsmen and near friends."

Though nothing is said respecting the age of the children, no more than of the adults ; yet the probabilities of the case are in favour of the younger branches of the family being very young. (1.) As Cornelius held a commission, and was in active service in the army, we cannot suppose he was a decrepit old man. (2.) The term *all*, is applied to his family, which is seldom the case where the family is not large. (3.) It is a rare circumstance to find a middle aged man, who has a numerous family of children, none of whom are in a state of infancy.

Though this case, as we have shown, does not prove that baptism should be deferred till the Holy Ghost be given, it does unquestionably prove, when the rite has been, in fact, put off to that period, that it ought not to be delayed an hour longer.

It is time to return to Acts ii. 38, which looks very much like a command respecting baptism, and see

what aspect it bears towards infants. The parents are commanded to be baptized, that they may receive the Holy Spirit. This promise of the Spirit is made to their children also, which has been proved to mean their infant children; and the question is, whether the command applies to the children as well as the promise.

But the text, I shall be told, says nothing about the baptism of children; they are not, therefore, entitled to the rite. Yet it looks rather odd, I think, to say, in effect, to a father, "I command you to enter into the church by baptism, in order that you may enjoy a prime privilege of the church, the gift of the Spirit; and I promise the same blessing to your little ones, if you will keep them out of the church, and refuse them the ordinance." This has very much the appearance of a contradiction. If the privileges of the church be ordinarily granted to young people before they enter, what inducements to become members can be afterwards offered to them? Shall they be required to be baptized for the remission of sins, after they are justified by faith? Shall they be urged to receive the ordinance, by a promise of the gift of the Spirit, after they have enjoyed his presence for years? If the children were to participate in the promise, before they obeyed the precept, they could not receive the rite upon the same principles on which it was given to their parents.

I will inform a baptist friend why children are not expressly mentioned in the command as well as in the promise: the reason is, there was no occasion for it; since they are clearly included in the precept, in consequence of being subjects of the promise. Attend to the following particulars:—

(1.) Except in the case of Cornelius, which, it has been proved, does not affect this argument, there is not an instance in the New Testament of a person receiving the Holy Spirit prior to baptism.

(2.) The order in the text, in reference to the parents, places the ordinance before the gift of the

Spirit. There is no intimation either here or anywhere else, that this order is to be inverted in the case of children; and I do not perceive how any man can suppose such a thing, whose system does not require it. The principal privileges of societies in general, are restricted to members. Some have appointed a particular ceremony of initiation to membership. Suppose a person desiring admission into one of these societies, be informed of this; be exhorted to submit to the ceremony, that he may enjoy the privileges of the institution; and be told, in the same breath, that the privileges of the institution are open to his children also; there can be no occasion to add, that in case the privileges be claimed for them, they must previously pass through the ceremony; because this is included in the previous information: if another order were instituted in relation to children, it should be stated. In the case under consideration, a command, (to be baptized,) is made the condition on which a privilege, (the gift of the Spirit,) is to be enjoyed. It seems necessarily to follow, that all for whom the privilege is claimed, must be subjected to the condition on which it is suspended.

(3.) We must bear in mind that the preacher and hearers on this occasion were all Jews. The order among that people had been for many centuries, "Be circumcised, and ye shall receive all the privileges of the Jewish church; for the promise is unto you and to your children." Did Jewish parents, who claimed the privileges for their children, defer the condition of circumcision till their little ones became adults? Such a thought never entered into their heads. When, therefore, the apostle informed a congregation of Jews, that they must be baptized in order to enjoy the blessings of the gospel dispensation, and that their children were entitled to these blessings in common with themselves, just as the children inherited with their parents under the old dispensation; it seems impossible that a single hearer should suppose the conditional rite was not to be performed upon their infants; because the

contrary had been the practice in his church, for nearly two thousand years.

Had the admission of infants into the church of God been "a new affair," it might have been proper to be more particular, with a view to prevent mistake; but when the sign of the covenant had been given to infants for so many centuries, it was only necessary to state to a people among whom this had been the practice, that the initiatory rite under the new dispensation was baptism, and that their children were still included in the covenant, just as they had been for ages past; and they must have concluded, as a matter of course, that their children should be baptized. Had the apostle intended to deny the initiatory rite of the covenant to children, though he admitted them to the enjoyment of covenant blessings, it was absolutely necessary he should have stated this, in terms the most explicit; because it would have been in contradiction to long established usage.

Here, then, we have another command in reference to baptism, in which infants are as clearly included as adults.

3. Another reason why persons were admitted into the church by baptism was, that they might receive a regular course of christian instruction. "Baptizing them and teaching them all things." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) Children are to be trained up in the correction and instruction of the Lord; and baptism, we have demonstrated, is to precede this christian education. But this passage also contains a precept to baptize, and is the third we have noticed, in which infants are most certainly included, as proper subjects of the ordinance. If a belief in Jesus as the Son of God be insisted on as a necessary preliminary to baptism, it has been shown that children of three years of age are capable of this; and as I extend the period of infancy to three years, this passage is conclusive in favour of infant baptism.

The three commands above noted, are the only ones which relate to christian baptism generally, and

which assign the reasons for its administration. One of these commands, (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20,) is contained in the commission which the apostles received from their divine Master, to propagate his religion in the world. Another of these commands, (Acts ii. 38, 39,) is given by the apostles in the first address they delivered under that commission to the Jews. And the other command, (Acts x. 48,) is given by the apostle in the first address delivered under that commission to the gentiles. Thus, in the commission which Christ gave to the apostles, and in the opening of the gospel dispensation under that commission, both among the Jews and gentiles, we find commands to baptize, founded upon reasons, which apply to infants equally with adults.

A baptist would, no doubt, wish to remind me, that he cannot find the word infant in any of the above texts; and that all my observations only go to infer they are included in them. Very true. And I cannot find the word adult, or woman, in any of these texts, and the word men occurs only in the address, Acts ii. Yet he will infer, I presume, that adults are included in the commands, both male and female.

Look at the command contained in the commission. No mention is made of adults or infants; men, women, or children. The command, however, must respect somebody; the text says, all nations. If our baptist friends cannot find infants in some households, I hope they will have no serious difficulty in finding a few in all nations; as well as some men and women.

Just in the same way that the objector can find men and women included in this command, I can find infants included in it. If it be a good argument against the little ones, that they are not named; it will apply equally against the adults, because they are not named either; and then we have a command to baptize nobody, neither man, woman, nor child!

It is rather amusing to hear some of our baptist brethren discourse on the importance of the ordinance. Losing sight of the fact, that nearly all their hearers

were baptized in infancy, or taking it for granted that it amounts to nothing, they expatiate on baptism as being plainly commanded, and as being termed the counsel of God, (Luke vii. 30,) and, at least, a part of righteousness. (Matt. iii. 15.) They very gravely warn us of the danger of rejecting this counsel of God ; and exhort us to follow the example of our Lord, who, to fulfil all righteousness, went into the water.

What God has commanded ought to be done. When he has given the reasons of the injunction, it is our duty to weigh them ; and when he has not, his revealed will is sufficient to engage the obedience of his people. With respect to the subject in hand, the reasons for baptism are assigned in the New Testament, and they are the most important imaginable. "Be baptized for the remission of sins. . . . Be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

The baptists will grant, that those who were not disciples, were not baptized ; and it is clear from the following passage, that our Lord carefully avoided the admission of those who were not disciples, that is, of unbaptized persons, to the privilege of pardon. After he had delivered the parable of the sower to "a great multitude," we read in Mark iv. 10, that "when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve, asked him of the parable." Those whom Mark styles, them that were about him, are by Matthew, chap. xiii. 10, and Luke, chap. viii. 9, styled disciples. Our Saviour's explanation to these disciples is as follows : "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God ; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables ; that seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." (Mark iv. 12.) We are taught in this passage that a knowledge of christianity, conversion, and forgiveness, were purposely held from those who were without. The mysteries of the kingdom were explained, and its privileges imparted, to the initiated,

and to them only. Those who were "without" might have become disciples, had they chose; and, in that case they might have enjoyed all the common benefits. The disciples knew no more of the parable, than the outward hearers did, at the time of its delivery; but "when he was alone, he explained all things to them."

According to the baptists, forgiveness of sin is not a privilege of the church; they expect a candidate to bring a pardon with him; they do not baptize for the remission of sin; their baptism is diametrically opposed to that of the apostles, and can be of no importance, because it confers nothing; it is, in fact, unlawful; because it requires as a qualifying condition, that which the Lord has restricted to them who have actually received the ordinance.

Baptism is stated to be of much importance, because our Lord urged it as necessary in his own case, in order to fulfil all righteousness. Let us then look at the baptism of Christ. What did he receive by it? "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 16, 17.)

He received the Spirit of God. And thus christians, generally, received the Spirit after the ordinance. They also received instruction after baptism. Jesus had no human instructor; but the Holy Spirit, which he now received, became his teacher; revealed to him the whole will of God, and thus qualified him for the ministry, upon which he was about to enter. This is his own explanation of the matter, recorded in Luke iv. 18, 19: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

But he did not receive the Holy Spirit merely as an instructor ; for immediately after the account of his baptism, and the descent of the Spirit, it is added, (Matt. iv. 1,) "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." It is manifest from this account, that he received the Spirit after his baptism, to instruct him in the nature of the new dispensation, and to assist him in his labours and conflicts, that he might finish the work God had given him to do, and triumph over all the power of the enemy. Thus it appears how necessary his baptism was, to enable him to fulfil all righteousness. Had it been agreeable to the divine economy for him to have received the Spirit prior to the ordinance, he might have fulfilled all righteousness without being baptized ; for the mere washing of water afforded him no assistance in the discharge of his duty.

Now compare this with the ordinance as administered by the baptists. What righteousness does their baptism enable those who receive it to fulfil ? Before they administer it, they instruct their candidates in the mysteries of the kingdom, and require evidences of a work of grace in them ; that is, evidences that they have already received the Holy Spirit. Their baptism then confers nothing ; and as it is in direct opposition to the order in the case of our Lord, and of those baptized by the apostles, it must be unlawful.

It deserves to be noted, too, in the baptism of our Lord, that as soon as the ordinance was concluded, he received a special manifestation of the divine favour by "a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This answers to the forgiveness of sins which others received after baptism. He had no sins to be forgiven ; but he was capable of receiving a manifestation of the favour of God : they received the same blessing ; but, on account of their being sinners, it was manifested in a different way, — by the promise of forgiveness. Infants too are capable of the divine favour, and of receiving the divine blessing ; for our Saviour blessed

them, and declared them to be the subjects of his kingdom.

Losing sight entirely of the reasons of the ordinance, and fixing upon the fact, that Jesus was an adult, when baptized, an inference has been drawn, that adults are the only proper subjects of the rite. If it were lawful to baptize infants, it has been said, why was not our Lord baptized in infancy? The answer is, his kingdom had no existence during his infancy; and, therefore, he could not be initiated into it. He was, however, at eight days old, admitted into the Jewish church by circumcision. (Luke ii. 21.) We have his example, therefore, for infant church membership; and as soon as the time arrived for setting up his kingdom, he received the christian ordinance.

Our Lord, as well as the primitive christians, received the three great blessings of the gospel dispensation; namely, instruction, the manifestation of divine favour, and the gift of the Spirit, after baptism. The importance which the scriptures ascribe to the ordinance, is owing to the establishment of this order. Infants, then, are capable of all the great ends of baptism; and are included in the three commandments relating to it; they ought, therefore, to receive it. The ministrations of our differing brethren are opposed to the scriptural order; and since they confer nothing, are nothing worth.

I cannot find any other qualification necessary for the ordinance than consent. If spiritual qualifications were required, some applicants would no doubt have been rejected; for we cannot suppose that the tens of thousands who received the baptism of John and of Christ, were all saints in reality, or taken for such by the administrators. And yet there is not one instance in the New Testament of a candidate being refused the rite.

“There went out unto John all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him.” (Mark i. 5.) Luke speaks of “the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him.” So it seems they

had made up their minds, from the current reports respecting him, before they had heard him for themselves, to receive his baptism. This multitude is divided by the evangelist into three classes,—the people, the publicans, and the soldiers. To this mass of people, of different professions, and, no doubt, of almost every variety of character, “John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water.” So we read again, “When all the people were baptized,” etc. (Luke iii. 7, 16, 21.) The apostle John says, “John was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim because there was much water there; and they came, and were baptized.” (John iii. 23.)

These texts make it abundantly manifest, that John did not deny the ordinance to any who applied for it. It is also quite certain that he did not consider the people generally, who came to him for the ordinance, as being at all religious. “Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” He would not call a multitude, who made a credible profession of justifying faith, a generation of vipers. He exhorted them to “bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.” When “the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?” He directed them to be charitable; he required the publicans to be just; and the soldiers to be quiet and contented. The Baptist, therefore, had no idea that they were religious at the time they applied to him; and since he baptized them all, he must have been satisfied, at the most, with mere promises of amendment. The fruits worthy of repentance, consisted in the discharge of the various duties of life; and John could not require the production of these as qualifications for the ordinance; because they could only be brought forth after the people had returned home, and resumed their ordinary business. The publicans, for instance, were required to “exact no more than that which was appointed them.” They talked, perhaps, of repentance; to walk by this rule, would be fruit

worthy of repentance ; but if they remained with the Baptist ever so long, and manifested all the outward signs of repentance, they could not produce this fruit till they had left him, and returned to their usual occupations.

Let us attend for a moment to these disciples. When they applied for the ordinance, the administrator admits they were men of bad character, a generation of vipers. Let them profess what they would, it is quite incredible that the whole of so immense a multitude should become truly pious all at once. Our Saviour was a more successful preacher than John ; and yet few comparatively, of his hearers, believed his report : he came unto his own, and his own received him not. We are, however, informed expressly, that John baptized all who came to him ; and as the sudden conversion of the whole of such a host of profligates is perfectly incredible, it is impossible that they should be baptized on a credible profession of true repentance.

Some have thought that John refused baptism to the pharisees and lawyers, because it is written, (Luke vii. 30, "The pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.") But this passage does not say, that John rejected them, but the direct contrary, that they rejected him. To those pharisees who applied to him, he said, "I indeed baptize you." (Matt. iii. 7—11.) This does not look as though he rejected them. All who came to his baptism, indeed received it ; but we can easily conceive that many of the gentry remained at home, and treated both him and his baptism with contempt.

I have been arguing upon the baptists' supposition, that those who came to John to be baptized of him, were instructed by him before they received the ordinance. But was this the fact ? It has been shown that in the commission of Christ, and in the practice of the apostles, baptism is placed before teaching. Did John go upon another plan ? Let us hear his his-

torian. "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (Mark i. 4.) Here baptism is placed before preaching. Let us hear John himself: "He preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water," etc. This language is quite decisive. They must have received the ordinance before they attended his ministry, or he could not say with truth, when he preached to them, I have baptized you.

John assumed the garb and manners of a prophet, and announced himself to the people as the harbinger of the Messiah, sent to prepare them for his advent, by baptism and instruction. As there was a general expectation at the time, of the manifestation of the Messiah, the report spread rapidly, was generally credited, and vast multitudes "came forth to be baptized of him." He gave them the ordinance, and then, being admitted into his dispensation as disciples, he taught them. The order which the Baptist pursued, was directly contrary to that of the moderns who have assumed his title. They endeavour by preaching, to reform people before they baptize them. John said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance;" or, as Dr. Campbell better renders the passage, "I indeed baptize you in water that ye may reform,"—not because ye are reformed. By receiving his baptism, they became his disciples, and acknowledged his authority as a prophet to instruct them. He then entered upon his work, as a master in Israel, and taught them that they must repent and be converted, in order to be prepared for the spiritual reign of the Messiah.

This proof, that no moral qualifications were required for the ordinance by the Baptist, completely destroys the principles which support the system of our differing brethren. He baptized and then instructed the people, that they might reform: they instruct and reform people, that they may be baptized: thus the order of scripture is reversed.

A credible profession of faith and piety, of which we hear so much in the present day, as a qualification for baptism, is not once mentioned in the New Testament in relation to this subject; and is out of the question, with respect to nearly, if not quite, every instance of baptism upon record. Those whom Christ and the apostles baptized, were generally persons to whom they were entire strangers: and how could the profession of these strangers, if they made any, be deemed credible? Are we to put implicit confidence in every thing which a person, of whose character we know nothing, may be pleased to whisper in our ears? Before I can give a man full credit for his profession, I must know something about him; particularly, that his life corresponds with his profession, and that he has a well established reputation for veracity. The baptists do not give the ordinance to strangers; they require such to wait awhile; they get acquainted with them, and seek more substantial proof than words afford, before they admit them into the christian family. How happens it then, that of the thousands baptized by Christ and the apostles, though mostly strangers, we have not one instance of delay? not an individual required to wait a day after he gave consent? Mr. Baxter's remarks upon this subject are weighty:—

“If any should say, it is not the meaning of Christ that baptizing should immediately, without delay, follow discipling; they are confuted by the constant example of scripture. For there is no mention that I can find, of any one person that was baptized long after being disciplined; or that ever the apostles of Christ did delay the baptizing of disciples. (John iv. 1, 2.) ‘Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.’ See how making and baptizing disciples are conjoined. (Acts ii. 38—41.) The three thousand were presently baptized the same day that they were made disciples, without staying till the morrow; though one would think the number of three thousand might have excused the delay, if they had taken longer time to do it

in: and some would think that their conversion being so sudden, the apostles would have waited for a trial of their sincerity. But this is not the wisdom of God, though it seem to aim at the purity of the church: scripture tells us of another way. (Acts viii. 12.) The people of Samaria, when they believed, were baptized, without delay. And verses 13, 14, Simon Magus was presently baptized, though yet not brought out of the gall of bitterness or bonds of iniquity, and had no part or fellowship in that business. Yea, the Samaritans were generally baptized by Philip, before they had received the Holy Ghost: for he was yet fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Verse 16.) So Acts viii. 36—38: the eunuch was baptized in his journey as they went, without delaying one day or hour after he professed himself a disciple. So was Paul baptized as soon as he rose from his blindness, upon the words of Ananias. (Acts ix. 18.) So was Cornelius, with his friends, baptized immediately without delay, the same day they were discipled. (Acts x. 47, 48.) So those in Acts xix. 5. So was Lydia and her household baptized without delay. (Acts xvi. 15.) And the jailer the same hour of the night that he was discipled. (Acts xvi. 33.) So the Corinthians. (Acts xviii. 8.) And Ananias' language to Paul (repeated Acts xxii. 16) is plain. 'And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized,' etc. And of the household of Stephanus that Paul baptized, it is implied too. And it is most observable which is said in John iii. 26, of Jesus himself, that he baptized, (by his disciples,) and all men came unto him. Whence it is undeniable that Jesus baptized without delay, even as fast as they came to him, and professed themselves disciples. And can we have a better example than the Lord Jesus himself? O that our brethren, that must have such trial and discoveries of the work of men's conversion, before they admit them, would but lay to heart all these scripture examples, and make more conscience of observing their rule! He that will go beyond Jesus

Christ in strictness, shall go without me. I do not think that he will be offended with me for doing as he did.

“And thus you see that, according to all the examples of christian baptism in the scripture, there was no delaying, no not a day usually, but they were all baptized as soon as they were disciplined. If any reason of necessity or convenience cause it to be put off for a few days, yet this is not properly delaying it, nor putting off many months and years, as the baptists do. And yet there is no warrant in scripture for any delay at all, but as necessity may excuse it.”*

Compare these scripture examples with the practice of the baptists, who make their children wait for ten or twenty years, after they believe in Jesus as the Son of God, before they are admitted to the ordinance. How striking the contrast!

What has credible profession to do in nearly all these cases; when it is very apparent that the christianity of the candidates, be its character what it might, was only of a few hours' standing, and that they were mostly entire strangers to the administrators? The baptists cannot, I believe, produce one instance of their giving the ordinance with so little delay; and they cannot produce one scripture example of it being denied to a person, as is the custom with them, for months and even years, after he has professed faith in the messiahship of Jesus. These plain facts demonstrate that our brethren do not give the ordinance upon apostolic principles.

It will perhaps be said that our Lord and the apostles had the gift of discerning of spirits; and since by this gift they could ascertain at once the sincerity and piety of the candidates, it was not necessary for them to delay the rite till the fruits of the Spirit should appear. To this I answer:—

1. Then they did not make credible profession, but actual possession, which they ascertained by

* *Infants' Church Membership and Baptism*, pp. 126, 127.

this extraordinary gift, the ground of their administrations.

2. If those who had not the gift of discerning of spirits, went on the ground of credible profession, then they would have delayed the ordinance, as the moderns do, who adopt that principle. Philip had not this gift; because he baptized Simon Magus; and yet he did not delay the rite. "When the Samaritans believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Their baptism is immediately connected, in point of time, with their believing: when they believed, they were baptized. Philip gave the rite to the eunuch immediately on his requesting him, though an hour or two before, he was in perfect ignorance of christianity. There was no difference, therefore, as to the time of administration, between those who possessed the gift in question, and those who did not: they all gave the ordinance as soon as the people were willing to receive it.

3. Jesus, by his disciples, baptized more persons than John. It is said, all men came to him for baptism. (John iii. 26; iv. 1, 2.) These words must denote, at least, that vast numbers—many thousands—received his baptism. If these were all saints, what became of them? On the day of pentecost, there was only about an hundred and twenty disciples. (Acts i. 15.) If it be thought that the greater part of those who were baptized, resided in the country, the difficulty is removed only one step; for if these many thousands of baptized persons were really saints, and were scattered through the villages and cities of Judea, they would form a great number of churches; and yet we have no mention in the accounts of the travels and labours of the apostles, after the day of pentecost, of their ever meeting with a company, or indeed an individual, of these supposed holy people who received the ordinance in the life-time of Jesus. But suppose, what appears to have been the fact, that

the principal part of those who came to Jesus for baptism, did it under an idea that he would found a glorious kingdom of this world;—all these visions would be dispelled by the crucifixion; and this accounts for it why, after this period, they are not to be found; the death of Christ would be the death of their discipleship. If the immense multitudes which received the baptism of John and of Christ were all pious people, the country must have been nearly full of saints. And yet we know that very few truly received Christ himself, (John i. 11,) though such vast numbers received his baptism; and the necessary inference is, that but few of those who received the ordinance, were subjects of a gracious influence. Jesus Christ knew what was in man, and could not be imposed upon by a hypocritical profession; he did not, therefore, require real piety as a qualification for the ordinance.

If baptism, as our brethren contend, be not included in discipling; yet since we have produced some thousands of examples of persons being baptized the same day they were made disciples, and not one instance of the delay of the rite can be produced; since Christ commanded the apostles to baptize disciples, which precept intervenes between discipling and teaching; and since Christ himself, by his disciples, baptized such multitudes on their coming to him; we are fully warranted, wherever we meet with disciples in the New Testament, to take them for baptized persons. If this conclusion be not supported by the premises, we may give up all reasoning.

That remarkable passage in John vi. 60—66, must be noticed again. “Many, therefore, of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, this is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he saith unto them, doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are

life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Fátther. From that time, many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

Now here are many disciples, who were, of course, baptized persons, that did not believe; and we are told, Jesus knew from the beginning they believed not; they, therefore, never had believed; and, consequently, were not believers at the time of their baptism. It is most manifest, then, that our Saviour did not make either the possession or the profession of faith, a condition of baptism. Not the possession; for Jesus knew from the beginning, that is, at the time they first applied to him and were admitted as disciples, that they believed not. Not the profession; for since our Saviour knew they believed not, had he required them to profess faith before he gave them the ordinance, he would have made the telling of a lie a qualification for discipleship, which we know was impossible. And what is very remarkable, these disciples never had any faith afterwards; for we read, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

There is no possible way of getting over this difficulty, but by denying the baptism of these disciples. And yet most of the baptists, I believe, grant that the disciples mentioned in the New Testament, were baptized persons. If any one, however, doubt this, let him try his strength at the argument by which I have attempted to prove it; I am not under any apprehension that it can be shaken. This passage then completely destroys credible profession, or any profession, as a necessary qualification for the ordinance. The fact is, as we have seen, Jesus Christ admitted to baptism and discipleship all who were willing to enter. John the Baptist and the apostles did the same. When admitted as disciples, they were taught, and required to repent,

believe, and obey. Let those who plead for qualifications necessary to baptism, produce them. I can find none. I have given examples of persons receiving the ordinance, who had neither christian knowledge, nor faith, nor forgiveness, nor the Holy Spirit, nor a holy life; and if any one can find any infants more unfit than these, they may forbid them water. And if they think the ordinance was forbidden to any, let them give us an instance. We do not deny that some had faith at the time they were baptized; but this is no proof that faith was required as a qualification. Some, we have seen, believed not; and Simon was a hypocrite, when baptized: but no one ever dreamed of making unbelief and hypocrisy qualifying conditions.

Some will dislike the broad principle here contended for, as opposed to the purity of the church. Admit all into the church, they will say, who choose to enter, and you will soon make it again a den of thieves. No. Preach pure doctrine, and enforce pure discipline, and the church will remain holy; some will be converted; and those who stand out, will soon be weary, and go into the world again. Our Lord's spiritual doctrine was the cause of the unbelieving disciples going back. The apostle John speaks of many persons of an anti-christian spirit, leaving the church: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (1 John ii. 19.) These people were in the church; and, therefore, were undoubtedly admitted by baptism; but the apostle gives us to understand they never had any religion; and as they were not disposed to give their hearts to the Lord, they soon deserted the fellowship of saints. The great evil does not consist in making easy terms of admission, but in keeping people in the church, when, after a fair trial, they remain unconverted.

When John is treating on the ordinance, he employs a figure, which admirably illustrates the consistency of free admission into the church, with the preservation

of her purity. He compares the church to a barn floor, covered with wheat and chaff, beaten out of the straw. The floor wants purging, or cleansing; and the instrument by which this is to be effected, is the fan of discipline. The sheaves are to be brought out of the field of this world, and laid upon the floor of the church. It is here, and not in the field, that the separation is to be made of the wheat from the chaff, the good from the bad. The preachers must set to work, and thrash; and when they have thrashed the sheaves quite clean, the governors of the church must use the fan, and blow the chaff away. The thrashers and fanners must both work with care: if the former lay on too lightly, they will not beat out the precious grain; and if too heavily, they will crush it; if the latter turn the fan too slowly, they will leave too much chaff in the heap; and if too quickly, they will blow away some of the small wheat. Gathering the wheat into the garner, and burning up the chaff, is an after, and a finishing process.

CHAPTER IV.

JUVENILE DISCIPLESHIP AND HOLINESS.—THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH GRAFTED ON THE JEWISH; AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE TWO CHURCHES COMPARED.—PRIVATE BAPTISM AND ANABAPTISM.

THE severe reproof which our Lord gave the disciples, who forbad the admission of infants to his presence for a blessing, his gracious declaration that they are the subjects of his kingdom, and his receiving them, praying for them, and blessing them, show with what feelings he regarded them; and make it hard to believe that, in purifying the church, he drove them all out, along with the buyers and sellers. (Mark x. 13—16.)

Some have thought that the kingdom, in this pas-

sage, means the church. If so, the membership of infants is established, and, with it, their right to baptism; for our brethren do not deny that a right to membership includes in it a right to the ordinance. The baptists generally suppose, I believe, that the kingdom of glory is intended. Admitting this, it looks rather harsh and cruel to exclude those from the church upon earth, who are allowed to be fit for the general assembly and church of the first born in heaven. The church would surely be a more eligible situation than the world, for training up these heirs of immortal bliss; and, however spiritual may be the constitution of the church, it cannot, we may hope, be defiled by those who are prepared for the inheritance of the saints in light. I am quite of opinion, however, that the kingdom, in this, as well as many other texts, means, what is usually called, the invisible church; and it must be granted that a person may belong to this, who is not united to any visible church. But no visible church has a right to reject him. The thought is revolting, and shocking, that the church may shut her door against the children of grace! It is a matter of no moment in this controversy, which of these interpretations be adopted, because the argument in favour of juvenile membership, which includes baptism, is pretty clearly deducible from any one of them.

Some have felt the force of this argument, and to evade it, have denied that the words *of such*, mean the infants themselves: adults, resembling little children, they think, are the only persons intended.

The following words prove the contrary: "Who-soever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." If a little child cannot receive the kingdom, make an adult as a little child, and then he cannot receive it. If the qualities which fit an adult for entrance are to be borrowed from a little child, they must qualify the child equally with the adult; and the adult cannot enter as a child does, if the child do not enter at all.

One great objection which our differing brethren have to the baptism and membership of little children is, that they are incapable of performing any religious services acceptable to God. It will be conceded, I hope, that God himself knows best what services are most agreeable to him. In Matthew xxi. 15, we read of "the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David." The chief priests and scribes were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say?" These devout gentlemen thought, it seems, that the house and service of God were profaned by the worship of these little ones. Is it not remarkable that in this, as in the former passage, the opposers of infants were, in this matter, the opposers of Christ, and that in both instances, he should become their advocate? "And Jesus said unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Here the lip of eternal truth hath decided, not only that infants can serve God; but that their services are perfect.

"Praise God in his sanctuary. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp: praise him with the timbrel and pipe; praise him with stringed instruments and organs: praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals." This is all very well in a Jewish temple. But if you want to hear his praise sounded in perfection, wait till this is all over, and the christian concert commences with the voices of children, babes, and sucklings. This melody will transport the angels, and the delighted Saviour will pronounce it to be perfect praise. And are these little cherubs to be cast out of the christian temple, because some pious adult christians happen to differ from the Redeemer upon this subject?

But further: these children are called disciples. As our Lord was making his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Matthew (chap. xxi. 9) speaks of "the multitudes" which attended him, and sung, Hosanna,

etc. The singing continued as they marched through the city to the temple, and was renewed in the temple while our Lord was healing the blind and the lame. Among the multitudes there would be mothers with their babes and sucklings, and children of all ages. The children, as is natural enough, were loudest in their rejoicings; and this led the chief priests and scribes to censure their conduct to our Saviour. (Verses 14—16.) Luke has informed us who these songsters were. "The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice. And some of the pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples." (Luke xix. 37—40.) Here the whole multitude of singers are called disciples; and among these our Lord has particularly mentioned babes and sucklings, as having offered a sacrifice of perfect praise. Sweet little creatures! I think I see their eyes sparkling with delight while gazing on their Saviour, and hear their seraphic voices singing, Hosanna to the Son of David! Though the adults had more knowledge than the children, it is doubtful whether they had as much simplicity, sincerity, humility, and affection.

It is objected, that a disciple is a scholar; but an infant cannot learn; therefore an infant cannot be a disciple. This is arguing directly against scripture, which, as we have seen, recognizes infants as disciples. Our Saviour asserts, as a fact, that babes and sucklings praise God: and if they can do this without being taught, they can do more than any adult heathen can accomplish.

If a baptist inquire, how can these things be? I answer, I fear it will be impossible to give him satisfaction, till the temper of his mind be changed. When he shall cease to despise the knowledge and services of little ones; when he shall delight, as the Saviour did, to witness their docility, confidence, and love; I believe all his prejudices against juvenile discipleship will vanish. The following remarks, from Mr. Baxter, are so excellent, that I cannot withhold them from the reader,

1. "Infants can partake of the protection and provision of their master, (as the children of those that the Israelites bought,) and enjoy the privileges of the family and school, and be under his charge and dominion, and that is enough to make them capable of being disciples. 2. They are devoted to learning, if they live; howsoever, they are consecrated to him as their master, who can teach them hereafter; and that is yet more. 3. I wonder you should be more rigorous with Christ in this case than you are with men. Is it not common to call the whole nation of the Turks, both old and young, by the name of mahometans, or disciples of Mahomet? and why not we and our children then by the name of christians, and disciples of Christ? And when a man hired a philosopher to teach him and all his children, were they not all then disciples of that philosopher? They that are entered under him as their master for future teaching, are at present in the relation of disciples. 4. And truly I wonder also that it should go so current, that infants are not capable of learning. There are more ways of teaching than by preaching in a pulpit. The mother is the first preacher to an infant, instrumentally. Do we not see that they do teach them partly by action and gesture, and partly by voice? That they can dishearten and take off from vices, is evident; and they can teach them obedience. And what if they cannot at first learn to know Christ? Even with men of years, that is not the first lesson. If they may be taught any part of the duty of a rational creature, that is somewhat. And if they can learn nothing of the parents by action or voice, yet Christ hath other ways of teaching than by men; even by the immediate, inward working of his Spirit. Yet it is not needful to prove any of this; it is enough that they are taken by Christ into his school and kingdom. But seeing that an infant can so quickly learn to know father and mother, and what they mean in their speeches and actions, I see no reason that we should take it for granted, that they can learn nothing of God, till we are able to prove it. Sure I am, scripture requireth to teach children the trade

of their life, in the time of their youth; (as early, no doubt, as they are able to understand;) and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And sure this nurture belongs to them as scholars of Christ."*

There is strong proof of infants being considered disciples, in Acts xv. 10: "Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Paul and Barnabas had been very successful in their ministry at Antioch, both among Jews and gentiles. Certain pharisees who believed, insisted that the gentiles should be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. The apostles and elders were met together to consider this question. Peter rose up and declared how God by him had given the gentiles faith and the Holy Spirit, without their being circumcised; and he very properly inferred, that since God had saved the gentiles without their being subjected to circumcision and the ceremonial law, this yoke, as he calls it, ought not to be put upon their necks.

Now the question is, who are meant by disciples in the text? The answer to this is, the gentiles, whom the pharisees insisted should be circumcised; and the infant children must be included along with their parents; for the Jews taught, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." (Verse 1.) Now according to the manner of Moses, the parents and children would have been circumcised at first, and children only, in all succeeding generations; this yoke, therefore, would have been put upon the necks of infants principally. And yet the imposition of this yoke, according to the apostle Peter, was attempted on none but disciples. It seems necessarily to follow, that the apostle Peter considered the infants, as well as their parents, disciples. If you say, nay; then they might have circumcised the infants without imposing a yoke on the necks of the disciples, and, of

* Infants' Church Membership and Baptism, pp. 22, 23.

course, without opposing the decision of the apostles ; for they only protected the disciples. Now can any man believe this ? I think not ; and if not, the apostles evidently decided against infant circumcision as well as adult ; consequently, infants, as well as adults, must be included in the term disciples.

Mr. Baxter furnishes another unanswerable argument upon this subject. "If Christ," says he, "would have some children received as disciples, then they are disciples ; but Christ would have some such received as disciples, therefore some such are disciples. All the question is of the antecedent ; and this is plain in Luke ix. 47, 48, compared with Matthew xviii. 5, and Mark ix. 41. He that receiveth this child in my name, receiveth me. Here observe, 1. It was the child himself that Christ would have received. 2. He would have him received 'in his name.' Now that can mean no less than as a disciple. When they are baptized, it is into his name. And that which in Luke is called 'receiving in Christ's name,' is expressed in Mark, 'one that belongeth to Christ,' and in Matthew, 'in the name of a disciple.' Though some of these places speak of infants, and some of others ; yet compared, they plainly tell you this, that to receive 'in Christ's name,' and as 'belonging to Christ,' and as 'a disciple of Christ,' in Christ's language, is all one ; for they plainly express the same thing intended in all. So that Christ hath encouraged me to receive children in his name. (Luke ix. 47.) And he expounded it to me, that this is to receive them as belonging to him, and as disciples. I know some frivolous answers are made to this ; but they are not worth the standing on." *

Mr. Booth gives some examples of children being mentioned on occasions comparatively trivial, and wonders they are never mentioned in connexion with baptism, if the apostles really gave them the ordinance. We shall show, in another chapter, that they are often

* Infants' Church Membership and Baptism, p. 22.

mentioned as the subjects of the rite. One of Mr. B.'s examples is taken from Acts xxi. 3—6, where a number of children with their parents accompanied Paul and his companions out of Tyre. It struck me, as a strange circumstance, that these little folks should walk with the apostle out of town, kneel down with him on the shore for prayer, and then take an affectionate leave of him, if they were not christians! This excited my curiosity to examine the passage; and I perceived at once that the children are designated with their parents by the term disciples. "We landed at Tyre; and finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way: and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed. And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again." They all, cannot refer to any but the disciples. With wives and children, must mean, including them. To mark the strong affection of the christians at Tyre to Paul and his fellow travellers, the writer states that they all, wives and children, as well as the men, accompanied these pious visitors out of the city, joined with them in prayer, and then parted with mutual benedictions and regrets.

If with, in this passage, does not signify including, the wives as well as children are excluded from discipleship. But in that case, what inducement could these infidel wives have to attend the ministers of Christ out of the city, and bid them an affectionate farewell? If the children were required by their fathers to attend, I hope these pious husbands did not compel their ungodly wives to pay this piece of respect to the servants of God! If the wives and children were not disciples as well as the men, the scene would have been more worthy the pencil of Hogarth than the pen of an evangelist, to delineate it. A motley group

of saints and infidels, honouring the preachers of the gospel with their attendance out of the city ! kneeling down together on the road, and joining in christian worship ! and exchanging with each other christian salutations ! He that can believe it, let him believe it.

These children, then, were certainly disciples ; and for reasons stated in the preceding chapter, as disciples, had undoubtedly received the ordinance.

The baptists have, then, in these juvenile disciples at Tyre, the proof of infant baptism, which Mr. Booth judged to be needful,* and which he seems to admit would be satisfactory. It is true the word baptism does not occur in this passage ; but this is of no moment, so long as the ordinance is necessarily implied. No one doubts the baptism of the parents : and why ? Because they are called disciples, joined in christian worship, and took an affectionate leave of their christian friends. But their children are united with them in the appellation, and the acts ; we have exactly the same evidence, therefore, that the little ones were baptized, as that their fathers were.

When we have given our brethren the evidence they require, we may hope they will be satisfied and thankful. I cannot, however, altogether repress a rising fear, that when they cannot deny the baptism of these children, they will turn round upon us and shrewdly remark, that they are not called infants. Here we are put to a stand again. Let the objector consider, that the mention of wives and children among the disciples, very naturally conveys the idea of several families of children ; and where will you take several families of children promiscuously, and find no infants among them ? I hope, therefore, it will be conceded, that there were infants in some of these families, unless some very substantial reasons to the contrary can be produced. How will a baptist friend dispose of these infants ? Were they left at home ? What ! when their

* Booth's *Pedobaptism Examined*, vol ii., pp. 22, 23.

fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, were all gone; are the helpless babes left alone to take care of themselves? I will not libel these pious mothers by indulging such a thought for a moment. The infants then must be ranked among the disciples.

If the whole of these examples of infant discipleship cannot be overturned, (and I think every one of them will stand a pretty severe scrutiny,) we have demonstrated two important particulars. 1. That children were disciplined along with their parents. 2. That since infants may be made disciples, disciples may be made without any previous teaching; which shows the baptists' interpretation of Matthew xxviii. 19, to be incorrect. A third point is proved in the preceding chapter, that baptism is included in discipleship.

In judging on the weight of the preceding evidence, the reader must keep in mind, that, up to the time when our Saviour entered on his ministry, infants were, by divine right, members of the church of God; and that he himself was initiated into the church when an infant. What has once been expressly enacted, cannot lose its authority till it be expressly repealed. A divine law is not to be cancelled by remote inferences and deductions. Now where does the Lord, or his apostles say, that infants shall not be members of the church any longer? or drop a single hint, in any form, to that effect? If our Saviour intended to exclude infants, what a suitable occasion offered, when the people were bringing their little ones, and the disciples rebuked them. Upon baptist principles, ought he not to have expressed his approbation of the conduct of the disciples; declared that children were not of his kingdom, and that, instead of an adult receiving his kingdom as a little child does, a little child must wait till it is of adult age, before it can receive the kingdom at all? When the Jews were so offended at the hosannas of the little ones, what a fine opportunity was afforded him of expressing his disapprobation of their noise, and his determination to have nothing to do with them, till they arrived at manhood.

All that our Saviour has said respecting children is perfectly inexplicable upon baptist principles, and is perfectly clear upon ours. Christ received children, and blessed them, because they are members of his kingdom; and he commanded the apostles to receive them in his name, and as his disciples, because they believed in him, and belonged to him. Where then is the power of rejection lodged? Has any church on earth any power, as a church, but what is conferred by Jesus Christ the head of it? And is it credible that he can have given any church authority to reject those whom he receives, and whom he commanded the apostles to receive?—those who believe in him, belong to him, are his disciples, and have received his kingdom? Are these to be abandoned by the church, and turned adrift into the wicked world?

It is time to proceed, and inquire in what light the apostles viewed the children of believers. According to the system of the baptists, the children of believers stand in no other relation to God than the children of unbelievers; they are all equally excluded from the christian church, till they come to mature age. Is there any apostolic authority for this? Quite the contrary. The apostle pronounces the children of unbelievers to be unclean, and the children of a believer to be holy. This decision was occasioned by a question which the Corinthians had put to the apostle, respecting husbands or wives who became christians after marriage, whether they ought to continue their matrimonial connexions with unbelievers. He replies in the affirmative, and declares, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." (1 Cor. vii. 14.)

By holy, here, the baptists contend, is meant legitimate. They do not pretend, however, that in any other place in scripture the word has this meaning, or that the apostle might not have used another word, much more suitable, had he really intended to convey

such a sense. On the other hand, Mr. Baxter has shown, that in nearly six hundred places in the Bible, where the same word occurs, it clearly signifies a separation to God. This argument, I should think, must be decisive, with all who do not interpret scripture by a creed, but are content to take their creed out of the scripture.

I shall assume, then, that the word holy, in this text, signifies a separation to God; and this destroys the foundation of exclusive adult baptism, which is, that all children stand in the same relation to God, whether their parents be christians or infidels. Now the apostle clearly establishes a distinction: the children of unbelievers are unclean; the children of believers are holy.

The text also proves the right of children to church membership. The Jews are frequently in the Old Testament, called "a holy nation;" and this designation included the children as well as the parents. In like manner, christians are called by the apostle Peter, "an holy nation;" (1 Peter ii. 9;) and we have the authority of the apostle Paul for including their infant seed in this holy community; their little ones have, therefore, as good a right as themselves, and as Jewish parents and children had, under the old dispensation, to be initiated into the covenant and church of God. Is not the proper idea of a christian church, that of persons separated from the world to God? How can holy children be separated from the unclean, if they are denied admission into the church? Does not their spiritual relation to the head of the church demonstrate their spiritual relation to the members of it? Are not children of one common parent, brethren, and members of the same family?

All the members of God's church, both among the Jews and christians, are called holy; and no instance can be given of a person being called holy, who was not a member of the visible church; the inference is undeniable, that holy infants belong to the visible church of Christ.

If those who are separated to God are to be shut out of the church, then the members of the church, though they might be denominated "a holy nation," could not with propriety be called, on that account, "a peculiar people;" for here would be a class of persons standing in the same holy relation to God, and yet a people distinct from them. If the members of the church are supposed to be styled "a peculiar people," not on account of their relative or real holiness, but because of their membership; then the little folks, if shut out of the church, are better entitled to this appellation, than those who are in it. For a holy people, distinct from the unclean, to be shut out of the church of God, by the authority of God, is the most singular affair we ever heard of. They must be a peculiar people indeed, when they belong to neither God, nor the devil—the church, nor the world!

"But the text says nothing about baptism!" True. I have been proving their right to church membership. What I have advanced on this head cannot be overturned, without proving that the word holy means legitimate; though not one text can be produced where it is pretended to have such a meaning, and though six hundred texts can be produced where it clearly denotes a separation to God. Having proved their membership, I shall take their baptism for granted, till our brethren admit people into their churches, without the ordinance. They seem at present to be going the contrary way. Many churches contend for the power of refusing communion to those, to whom the ministers have given the rite.

The exclusion of infants from the christian church is defended on the supposition, that the Jewish church was taken down; and that the christian church is a new erection, upon principles which do not admit of these juveniles forming a part of the family of God. But was the old church abolished?

In Romans xi. 17, the Jewish church is called an "olive tree." This tree was not destroyed, and a new one planted. "Some of the branches," it is

true, "were broken off;" but if only some, then some remained. The gentiles when brought into the gospel church, "were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature, into a good olive tree:"—the same olive tree from which some Jewish branches were broken; for says the apostle, "Some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree." The reason why some Jewish branches were broken off this church, or tree, was, "because of unbelief." But their unbelief was voluntary, and, therefore, might have been avoided; and, thank God, may yet be cured: "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in." They are called in the next verse, "The natural branches;" and when restored, "shall be grafted into their own olive tree." Instead of the Jewish church being destroyed, the gospel church was incorporated with it. Every gentile christian is grafted into the old olive tree, or church; and every Jewish christian is in his own olive tree, or church.

The gospel has, unquestionably, introduced a great difference as to the mode of culture and dressing of this tree; or, in other words, as to the ordinances, rites, and ceremonies of the church; but there is no change as to the members. According to the apostle's figure, the branches denote the members; and none of these are broken off but through unbelief. The unbelief by which many of the Jews were broken off from the church, was a voluntary and criminal rejection of Christ. Of this, infants were incapable; and as some of the Jews believed, and, therefore, were not broken off, the children of these believers, being what the apostle calls "natural branches," would remain in the olive tree with their parents. And as the gospel makes no distinction between Jew and Greek, the children of believing gentiles must be entitled to the same privilege.

If it should be objected, as has sometimes been the

case, that by the olive tree is intended the invisible church, I answer, then the branches broken off were members of the invisible church; but members of the invisible church are persons of real piety; and did none of the Jews reject Christ, but such as were truly religious?

But the christian church, it is said, differs very materially from the Jewish, in many important particulars, which involve the exclusion of infants. The christian church is gathered by ministers, through the preaching of the gospel; the Jewish church was founded by the magistrate in acts of state. The christian church consists of believers, who of free choice assemble together for the purposes of receiving instruction, executing discipline, and observing the ordinances; the Jewish church did not admit of this liberty, but required all to be members of the church who were members of the state. The christian church is composed of persons who in appearance and profession, have come out of the world, and engaged themselves to a holy life; the Jewish church was national, including "the children of the flesh," as well as "the children of the promise." It is inferred from these differences, that though children were members of the church of old, they can have no place in it now.

There is much error mixed with some truth, in objections of this sort; a little discrimination will set all right again.

The Mosaic constitution was an alliance of church and state. But infants were in the church before the time of Moses; and therefore before this alliance existed. Abraham, "the father of circumcision," was a prophet and priest of God. He circumcised none but those born in his house, and bought with his money. If the word house, here includes all his male servants, it does not follow that any constraint was employed. Under the constitution of Moses, gentiles might live with the Jews, without being obliged to be circumcised, or to make profession of the Jews' religion; and the law of circumcision was not more

strict in the patriarchal age than under the Mosaic economy.

Infants were by this rite initiated into the church of God in Egypt, when the constitution of the church was in direct opposition to the religion of the state, which was idolatrous; for we read expressly that "all the people that came out of Egypt were circumcised." (Joshua v. 4, 5.) Here then is a church, with infants in it, which was called out of the world, not by magistrates, but by prophets and ministers of God; a church which was opposed to the religion of that political constitution under which its members lived; and a church which existed and flourished for many centuries before it was associated with the state.

In these respects, the ancient church bears a striking resemblance to the christian, which was some centuries before it became national. The baptists, and some others, speak of gathering the members of the christian church out of the world by one or two at a time, as though they thought the church must become anti-christian, as soon as it should take in the greater part of a nation. Most of the national churches which have hitherto assumed the christian name, it must be granted, have done little credit to the cause of Christ; but the sure word of prophecy encourages a hope of better times to come. Christianity was certainly intended by its divine Founder to become national, in a much more extensive sense than the Mosaic institutions ever were. The following texts will prove this point, beyond a doubt, to every unbiassed mind. "The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.... And there was given him," the Son of Man, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him.... And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.... All nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before

thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. . . . All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. . . . He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. All nations shall call him blessed. . . . The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. . . . Many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. . . . He shall sprinkle many nations. . . . The nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory. . . . Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people. . . . And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it." (Zech. xiv. 9; Daniel vii. 14; Isaiah ii. 2; Psalm xxii. 27; lxxii. 8, 11, 17; lxxxvi. 9; Matt. xxi. 43; Micah iv. 2; Isaiah lii. 15; Jer. iv. 2; Zech. ii. 11; Rev. xxi. 24.)

These prophecies and promises, to which it would be easy to add many more, give a latitude of meaning to our Lord's commission, "Go ye and disciple all nations," of which many people have no conception.

As to the power which the magistrate exercised in religious matters, after the church became allied to the state, it did not amount to anything considerable.

No gentile who lived in the land of Israel, was required to be circumcised, or to observe the religious festivals. It was only when a stranger wished to join in their worship, that he was enjoined circumcision, as a qualification. (Exod. xii. 43—48.) The law of circumcision was exactly the same before, as it was after, the church became national, and under the supervision of the magistrate.

The penalty of cutting off, mentioned so frequently in the Mosaic code, is often threatened as the punishment of moral offences, which any well regulated state would and ought to inflict; and when connected with

subjects of a purely religious nature, it means no more than excommunication from the church, except in a few cases; and it would be difficult to show that, in similar cases, a christian magistrate has not the same power.

The Mosaic law, it will be said, forbade the exercise of any other religion, and, therefore, was founded on principles not at all accordant with the spirit of christianity. I do not find penalties enforcing any religious act, except circumcision, and these existed before the time of Moses. There are many regulations laid down relating to worship, and many religious acts required, which are not enforced by civil penalties. The law of sacrifices is very minute; but when the people neglected them, instead of giving the magistrate any coercive power, God threatened to punish them himself. (Mal. chap. i. and ii.)

Idolatry, and a few other sins, were punished capitally by the magistrate. And ought any christian country to allow its professors to relapse into such idolatry as was practised by the neighbours of the Israelites, or permit idolaters to come and settle among them, and practise their infamous and horrid rites? If some of our gentlemen who have been in the east, should wish to set up here the idolatry they have seen practised there, ought our government to permit them to murder their aged parents, and their helpless offspring, because their new religion required or permitted such sacrifices? Must our magistrates be mute spectators of the rise of heathen temples, and of the filthy and cruel rites performed in honour of these strange gods? Or ought such things to be permitted here in persons who had been trained up in such practices, and who might wish to come and settle among us?

In fact, I can find nothing coercive in the religion of the Jews, except in the point of circumcision. By this rite, a person was solemnly dedicated to the true God, initiated into his church, and laid under a religious obligation to worship him by the prescribed

ceremonies, and to keep his commandments. But after this rite was performed, he was not required by bodily pains and penalties to subscribe to one article of faith, or to perform one ceremony of worship. The case of an adult heathen slave being compelled to submit to circumcision has the appearance of hardship; but this is no peculiarity of the law of Moses, as it existed for many hundred years before the church was brought into alliance with the state. Besides, there was nothing in this to hurt the conscience of a man who might disapprove of the rite, because he was not required to perform the act himself. His master, who had power over his body, performed the rite; the slave was merely passive, and was never compelled by coercive means to say or do anything in religion. If, when instructed, he disapproved of the religion of his master, he had only to avoid any public act of idolatry, and any blasphemous revilings of the religion of the state, and he was safe.

The Jewish church was not so national as to include in it all the inhabitants of the country. Many gentiles resided among the Jews, who never embraced their religion; and all the excommunicated were out of the church. If all were not actually expelled whom the law denounced, that was not the fault of the law, but of the officers; and if the wicked were, according to law, put away, the church was pure; for as it was constituted under Moses, the Lord calls it holy, and, therefore, we have no right to call it carnal. There were undoubtedly carnal people in the church; but the church, as a church, was not carnal. When therefore it is asserted from Romans ix. 8, and other similar texts, that God permitted persons to be in the Jewish church who had no religion, but that he requires the members of the christian church to be holy and spiritual; we answer, that God required the members of the Jewish church to be holy and spiritual, and permits persons to be in the christian church who have no religion. The former no one will dispute; and the latter is proved by the fact, that unholy persons were

in the apostolic churches ; and by the parable of the tares of the field, which directs that both must grow together till the harvest. The character of the christian church, however, as a church, must be like that of the Jewish, holy ; and this may be maintained by the same means—the exercise of discipline.

Upon the subject of choice, there was no more constraint put upon the Israelites, in the constitution of their church under Moses, than there is put upon us in embracing the religion of Christ. Moses, as the prophet of God, convened the Israelites, addressed them on the subject of their religion, and then put it to their choice, whether they would have religion with a blessing, or their sins with a curse. (Deut. xxx. 19, etc.) When the covenant was renewed under Joshua, the same plan was pursued. “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve ; whether the gods whom your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell : but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods.” (Jos. xxiv. 15, 16.) Can a christian be more free in the choice of his religion than these Jews were in the choice of theirs ?

If the children of Jews, during their minority, were not at liberty to choose whether they would be of the religion of their fathers or not ; the rule is exactly the same as to the children of christians. They are to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and parents are required to have faithful or believing children.

I cannot find any such difference in the constitution of the two churches, as to justify the exclusion of children from the one, when it is admitted that by divine command they were included in the other. And I would just suggest here, that objections of this sort, which have no direct proof in them, but derive their force from remote inferences, should always be looked

upon with suspicion, when they are opposed to any divine institution; because it very commonly happens, that a fatal flaw may be found in some stage of the argument; and because it does not comport with the precision of divine revelation, that what is clearly enacted, should be obscurely repealed: and this observation ought to have the more weight with our baptist friends, who are perpetually demanding the most clear and express passages of scripture from their opponents, for everything which is opposed to the baptist creed.

Suppose a great number of christians to be driven out of a heathen country by oppression and persecution, (as the Jews were out of Egypt,) and to become a free and independent people in the country to which they emigrate,—they must have a political constitution of some sort; and I presume no one will deny that they have a right, if they are all agreed upon it, to make their laws upon christian principles. Suppose they establish christianity, just as Moses did Judaism, by putting all sects upon a level as to civil rights, and leaving each at perfect liberty to manage its own ecclesiastical affairs, and doing no violence to any man's conscience; can any advocate for religious liberty and church independency object to this? Though christianity does not allow magistrates to persecute and destroy people on a religious account, it does allow their interference so far as to protect and encourage the church; "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers."

The christian church does undoubtedly differ from the Jewish in many points of importance; but I do positively deny, that any article of difference can be pointed out, which involves in it the exclusion of infants from the church of Christ.

The privacy with which infant baptism is usually administered, is often objected to as opposed to the intention of the ordinance. A public profession of christianity, it is said, is to be made at baptism; and it is demanded how this can be done by an infant, and

in a private room, where perhaps not half a dozen persons are present.

Christ, we admit, is to be confessed, and publicly too; but this is never in scripture connected with the time of baptism. I cannot find in the New Testament either precept or example in support of the practice of administering christian baptism in public.

But though the publicity of the ordinance is nowhere in scripture required, I will not go the length of saying, that its performance in the presence of the irreligious affects its validity. To our brethren it is of some importance to make the business as public as possible; because, when the crowd is collected, the administrator has a fine opportunity of declaiming against infant sprinkling.

In support of our practice, I will produce some scripture examples of private administration. We have no account of a single spectator being present at the baptism of the eunuch; and it is certain the multitude could not have been convened on the occasion, because the parties themselves had no thought of the ordinance before they came to the water. No unprejudiced person can read the account of the baptism recorded in Acts xix. 1—7, and suppose any were present, besides the subjects of the ordinance, and the apostle. The baptism of the jailer and his family could not be a public affair, for none of them so much as dreamed about it before the earthquake took place, which happened at midnight; and the ceremony was performed, we are told, "that same hour of the night." (Acts xvi. 25—33.) This case shows, that it is no more necessary for the church, than for the world to be present at the ordinance; because, though Lydia and her family resided in the city, the ceremony was not deferred till the next day, that they might witness it.

And, in point of fact, what public confession do the baptists make at the time the ordinance is administered? I once witnessed the immersion of two persons in a baptist chapel; but they made no profession of christianity at all. I have inquired of several persons who

have attended on those occasions ; but none of them ever heard a confession of faith from the candidates. The confession, I understand, is made privately to the church ; why then is not the ordinance administered privately also ? But there is no necessity for the candidate to make confession to the church. Neither the eunuch nor the disciples at Ephesus, had an opportunity of confessing Christ to the brethren ; and though the jailer might have spoken his experience to Lydia and her family, the apostle dispensed with it : I suppose it was not thought important.

What is there in the nature of baptism, that it may not be as properly administered in the absence, as in the presence, of wicked people ? It is generally viewed as the right of initiation into the christian church. And must the act be invalid, if not performed in the presence of an assembly of God's enemies ? Are these the only legal witnesses in such a case ? The Jews initiated males into God's covenant by circumcision : was it necessary, when a man was circumcised, that a number of Jewish and heathen men, and women too, should be present to witness the ceremony ?

It is time now to consider another point. The baptists agree with us that the ordinance should be administered but once to the same individual. To justify their giving of it to adults who had received it in their infancy, they boldly and roundly assert, that what is called infant baptism, is not christian baptism. If, then, the lawfulness of giving the rite to little ones can be maintained, the sinfulness of the practice of our differing brethren is manifest. Now let any man seriously weigh the evidences in favour of infants which this little book contains, and then let him ask his heart, whether they amount to nothing. Suppose the weight of evidence should appear to be something in favour of the baptists, this may be a reason why the baptism of a child should be deferred till it is of adult age, but is not a sufficient reason why a person who received the rite in infancy should be subjected to it again. For if there be some weight in the arguments of the

pedobaptists, God may, for aught we know, accept of their performance of the rite as sufficient, though it be not perfect. In this case, it is highly presumptuous in any man, to pronounce a service null, which Heaven has approved; and it is no small sin, on such a presumption, to give the rite a second time, and require the subject of it to dissolve all his pious connexions, and to commence again his religious career.

The question we are now trying is not, whether the baptism of a believer's child should take place in infancy, or be deferred till adult age; but whether a person who has actually received the rite in infancy, ought to be subjected to it again when he is of age to determine for himself. Now I contend he ought not, unless it can be clearly made out, that God will not accept the first ministration; for no man has a right to reject, whatever imperfection there may be in the thing, what God has been pleased to receive. It is not enough, therefore, to prove that baptism had better be deferred; but in the case of its actual reception in infancy, it must be proved to be so completely null, that God absolutely rejects it, and requires the subject to receive it again when of riper years.

If God will accept of none of our services, which are tainted with imperfection, who can do a work well pleasing in his sight? The apostle makes an excellent remark in reference to an imperfect believer, in Romans xiv. 1: "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." There was room for doubt and dispute about this person's faith; but in such a case, the apostle directs the exercise of charity, rather than the powers of disputation. Since faith is as important a subject as baptism, the above advice is quite applicable to the subject under discussion.

If an imperfection in an ordinance nullify it, what are the baptisms of our brethren good for? We have shown that they require unscriptural qualifications. Our Lord directed the apostles to baptize people, and then instruct them in the whole of his religion; the

baptists instruct people in the peculiarities of christianity, before they initiate them. The apostles gave one baptism for the remission of sins; the baptists require them to give evidence of the remission of sins, to qualify for a second baptism. The apostles promised the gift of the Spirit as a privilege subsequent to the ordinance; the baptists require the possession of this as a title to it. None of the reasons on which the ordinance is founded by our Lord and his apostles, apply to it, as performed by our differing brethren; we might therefore argue, that since they perform the rite on other grounds than those on which it is placed in the New Testament, theirs is not the christian institute. And I have never yet seen an argument which applies with half the force against infant baptism, that this does against the principles on which the ordinance is given to adults. I would not say, however, that adult baptism, with all these imperfections, is invalid, when given to those who had not received the rite in infancy; but I do say, that when, with all these unscriptural conditions, it is imposed upon those who had previously received it, this adult washing can avail nothing; for it could not well have been performed in a more unscriptural manner in the first instance; and, therefore, if that was not sufficient, then neither is this; and if that were accepted, this is unnecessary, and, I fear, sinful.

Our baptisms are made no account of, because those who receive them are supposed to come short of the necessary qualifications. But if we are blamable for being satisfied with less than scripture requires, are the baptists not blamable for demanding more? Is it not as dangerous to add to the word of God, as to take from it? If we err, it is on the side of charity; but if they err, it is on the side of bigotry. We may spoil by overdoing, as well as by underdoing; and if our ministrations are nullified by defect, theirs are equally so by redundancy.

We are confidently told, "Infant sprinkling is no baptism." The objector reminds me of some not

pedobaptists, God may, for aught we know, accept of their performance of the rite as sufficient, though it be not perfect. In this case, it is highly presumptuous in any man, to pronounce a service null, which Heaven has approved; and it is no small sin, on such a presumption, to give the rite a second time, and require the subject of it to dissolve all his pious connexions, and to commence again his religious career.

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If God will accept of none of our services, which are tainted with imperfection, who can do a work well pleasing in his sight? The apostle makes an excellent remark in reference to an imperfect believer, in Romans xiv. 1: "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." There was room for doubt and dispute about this person's faith; but in such a case, the apostle directs the exercise of charity, rather than the powers of disputation. Since faith is as important a subject as baptism, the above advice is quite applicable to the subject under discussion.

If an imperfection in an ordinance nullify it, what are the baptisms of our brethren good for? We have shown that they require unscriptural qualifications. Our Lord directed the apostles to baptize people, and then instruct them in the whole of his religion; the

baptists instruct people in the peculiarities of christianity, before they initiate them. The apostles gave one baptism for the remission of sins; the baptists require them to give evidence of the remission of sins, to qualify for a second baptism. The apostles promised the gift of the Spirit as a privilege subsequent to the ordinance; the baptists require the possession of this as a title to it. None of the reasons on which the ordinance is founded by our Lord and his apostles, apply to it, as performed by our differing brethren; we might therefore argue, that since they perform the rite on other grounds than those on which it is placed in the New Testament, theirs is not the christian institute. And I have never yet seen an argument which applies with half the force against infant baptism, that this does against the principles on which the ordinance is given to adults. I would not say, however, that adult baptism, with all these imperfections, is invalid, when given to those who had not received the rite in infancy; but I do say, that when, with all these unscriptural conditions, it is imposed upon those who had previously received it, this adult washing can avail nothing; for it could not well have been performed in a more unscriptural manner in the first instance; and, therefore, if that was not sufficient, then neither is this; and if that were accepted, this is unnecessary, and, I fear, sinful.

Our baptisms are made no account of, because those who receive them are supposed to come short of the necessary qualifications. But if we are blamable for being satisfied with less than scripture requires, are the baptists not blamable for demanding more? Is it not as dangerous to add to the word of God, as to take from it? If we err, it is on the side of charity; but if they err, it is on the side of bigotry. We may spoil by overdoing, as well as by underdoing; and if our ministrations are nullified by defect, theirs are equally so by redundancy.

We are confidently told, "Infant sprinkling is no baptism." The objector reminds me of some not

over-charitable professors I have met with. When one of these gentlemen has received a real or supposed injury from a christian brother, and a minister has attempted to soften his resentment, by urging those many texts which require us to forgive our brethren their trespasses; the authority of all these passages of holy writ has been cancelled by a single remark: "He is not my brother. If he had any religion, he could not have treated me as he has done." Offend some people in ever so trifling a point, and you have no religion. Differ in some small matters from a baptist, in the administration of the ordinance, and yours is no baptism. Most people, however, will think that a slight deviation from christian rectitude does not make a man a reprobate; and that some little impropriety in the performance of a ceremony, if it could be proved, does not annul it.

The reasons for annulling infant baptism, are, 1. The little ones are not qualified for the ordinance, for want of faith. 2. They should be immersed instead of being sprinkled. Suppose we grant this, for the sake of argument, (though we positively deny it in point of fact,) it will be conceded, we presume, on the other hand, 1. That the minister is qualified to give the ordinance, though an infant is not qualified to receive it. And 2. That the words used at the administration are quite sufficient, though the quantity of water used is deficient. The irregularity then is partial, not total. The inquiry therefore is, whether this irregularity be sufficient to nullify the ordinance.

(1.) As to faith. Simon Magus had no faith, in the sense our opponents affix to the word. If it be said, he professed faith; I answer, and what then? The favourite text urged by the baptists requires the possession of it. "Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." Now they do not suppose that Simon believed with all his heart; but take him, as we do, to have been an hypocrite, yet his hypocrisy did not nullify the rite; for though the apostle exhorted him to repent of his wickedness, and

though the man was humbled, and besought the apostle to pray for him, and, therefore, was probably forgiven; yet we have not a word of his being subjected to the ordinance again. Simon had no more faith in his heart than an infant has. He was a magician by profession. He was astonished at the miracles he saw Philip work, and joined himself to the christians, with a view to get into the secret. When he perceived the apostles conferred miraculous powers by laying on of hands, he offered them money to convey to him the mysteries of their art. It is plain enough from the whole relation, that his sole object in joining the christians was, to improve himself in the art of sorcery. If an infant has not faith, it has innocence; but Simon had neither. The defect in Simon's baptism was his own fault; the defect in the baptism of an infant, if there really be any, is the fault of the administrator; and this ought not to affect the subject so much as a fault of his own. If the greater irregularity, therefore, in the case of the magician, did not affect the validity of the ordinance; it is preposterous to imagine a lesser irregularity in the case of an infant should make it null.

(2.) As to the quantity of water. Suppose immersion to be the true mode, does it follow that the ordinance is void, if the subject be not plunged? The Israelites are said to have been "baptized unto Moses, in the cloud, and in the sea." (1 Cor. x. 2.) No one pretends that they were plunged in the ocean. This is a clear proof that baptism does not necessarily imply immersion. Other examples are given in the chapter where the mode is discussed.

When our Saviour was about to wash the disciples feet, Peter modestly declined the honour. "Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." (John xiii. 8—10. This washing was a sign of interest in

Christ. When Peter understood this, he wished the element to be applied very liberally ; but our Saviour informed him that washing the feet alone was quite sufficient. Baptism, like this, is a ritual washing, and cannot denote anything more important than an interest in Christ ; if, therefore, the application of a little water to the feet be a sign sufficiently significant of so high a privilege, the application of it to the head, a much more noble part, must answer all the mystical intentions of baptism.

Rites and ceremonies are not often annulled in consequence of irregularity. We have an account of the circumcision of Moses' child in Exodus iv. 25, 26. Zipporah, who performed the rite, was an unbeliever, and appears, both by her speech and conduct at the time, to have been in a violent passion. There is not the slightest appearance of devotion in the operator, or of a dedication of the child to the Lord, on the occasion. This was undoubtedly irregular ; and yet God accepted of it.

Nothing could be more explicitly settled by law among the Jews, than the order of succession to the office of high-priest. But in the times of the Romans, the order of succession was disregarded, the office was sold to the highest bidder, and the vilest characters wore the mitre ; and yet our Saviour admitted the validity of the ministrations of these irregularly constituted pontiffs.

Arguing, therefore, on the supposition of the baptists, that there is an impropriety in the administration of the rite on infants, it does not follow that their baptism is null ; the contrary, it is presumed, has been pretty clearly proved. Whereas the nullity should be completely established, before it is presumed, without either precept or precedent, or so much as a single hint from the New Testament, to subject any one to the ordinance a second time.

There is another point upon which our differing brethren can produce no clear scripture testimony : the practice of giving the ordinance to persons of other

communions, when it is understood they will not quit their old connexions, and join the baptist churches. Some baptist ministers, I believe, do not approve of this; but I know several who take a pleasure in doing a kind job in this way, for their neighbours. Viewing baptism as a rite of initiation into the visible church of Christ, and our baptist brethren holding this sentiment in common with us, I cannot see how this intention is answered in the case under consideration. Suppose a Methodist, for instance, has been teased about believers' baptism, till he scruples as to the validity of the rite he received in infancy. He is told that Christ was baptized; that it is plainly and solemnly commanded; that it is a part of righteousness; that it is connected with salvation, etc. He feels very uneasy; he wishes to have believers' baptism, but is unwilling to leave the Methodist society, and unite with the baptists. A baptist minister has compassion on him in this state of perplexity, and gives him the ordinance. What church is he baptized into? Not the baptist; that was not expected. Not into the Methodist; for he was in that before, on the credit of his first baptism. What religious privilege is conferred by this second administration? None whatever! and not another word need be said in proof of its being unscriptural and unlawful.*

It will, perhaps, be admitted that this practice is irregular, and its justification be rested on the plea of charity. But does it require any great stretch of charity to suppose, that though infant baptism may be irregular, it may yet be valid? A baptist who can go as far as this, will see no occasion to administer the

* I knew a young man, a Methodist, who was baptized by an anti-pedobaptist minister. The Lord's supper was received by the baptist church that day, and the young man concluded, as a matter of course, that he might communicate with them. In this, however, he was mistaken—he was positively refused. Can an instance be produced of a person, baptized by an apostle, being denied communion with an apostolical church, when he had done no act subsequent to the ordinance to forfeit the privilege?

rite in an irregular manner, to persons who do not join his church; and he whose charity stops short of this, has, I fear, very little to boast of. It would be truly charitable to advise such applicants to go home again, and muse on the words of the apostle: "Go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation—of the doctrine of baptism." (Heb. vi. 1, 2.)

CHAPTER V.

EXAMPLES OF THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS' CHILDREN.

THE baptism of households recorded in the New Testament, must now come under consideration.

To begin with Lydia. It has been objected, on several grounds, that this case is nothing to our purpose. There are many households which have no children. Lydia might be a single woman, whose household consisted of servants; and whether they were servants or children, they will not serve our turn, it being evident they were adult believers, since Paul and Silas are said to have comforted them. (Acts xvi. 15—40.)

The editor of Calmet, in his "Facts and Evidences on the Subject of Baptism," has proved that the word *oikos*, when spoken of persons, denotes a family of children. "The natural import of the term *oikos*, 'family,' includes children of all ages. In proof, I offer you fifty examples; if fifty are not sufficient, I offer you a hundred; if a hundred is not sufficient, two hundred; if two hundred are not sufficient, four hundred. I affirm that *oikos* very often expresses the presence of infants: of this I offer you fifty examples; and, if you admit classical instances, fifty more. I tell you also, that somewhat more than three hundred instances have been examined, and have proved perfectly satisfactory."*

* Concluding Facts and Evidences, pp. 13, 14.

The same writer shows, that when the sacred penmen include servants, slaves, and the whole domestic establishment, they use the word *oikia*, which answers to the English word "household," that is, all who hold to the house, or family. The term used in Acts xvi. 15, is *oikos*. The passage may be read: "And when she was baptized, and her family." Lydia, then, had a family of children; and these children were baptized at the same time with their mother.

It deserves to be noted, that Philippi was not the fixed residence of Lydia; she was "of the city of Thyatira;" this was her home, where the goods were prepared for the market: and at Philippi she had only a temporary residence, as "a seller of purple." Attention to this will remove some difficulties, which have been opposed to our interpretation of the passage.

1. It has been demanded, if Lydia were a married woman, why have we no account of her husband? The account says, she had an *oikos*, a family of children; and I hope this statement is not to be discredited, because her husband is not mentioned. On the supposition, however, that she was a married woman, the omission of her husband's name is easily accounted for; he was not at Philippi, but at home, at Thyatira, superintending the manufactory.

2. As the purple dye would be prepared for market at the home establishment, "the brethren" could not be Lydia's servants, employed in manufacturing the article, as some have supposed.

3. In the apostle's epistle to the church of Ephesus, there is no salutation of his hostess, nor any reference to her, or any part of her family. This is the more remarkable; because he is so particular in his epistles, in mentioning his old friends by name. Suppose she resided in Philippi only a few weeks, or months, for the purpose of selling her purple; and then returned home, the omission is accounted for; otherwise it is inexplicable.

4. Thyatira was situated at a great distance from Philippi. It is scarcely to be supposed that a woman,

past the meridian of life, would take a long journey with her family and goods, and be busily employed in trade. If she were young, or but middle aged, it is not to be expected that her family would be grown up. All the circumstances of the case, therefore, make it probable that the younger branches of the family were infants.

There is no proof whatever that the brethren, mentioned in verse 40, were the sons or servants of Lydia; all the evidence is on the other side of the question. After the conversion of Lydia, the apostle and his companions held public meetings for "many days," (ver. 16, 18,) before they were cast into prison. There can be no doubt but many were converted at these meetings; especially as the apostle, in his epistle to the church at Philippi, represents them as having lived in "fellowship in the gospel from the first." (Philip. i. 5.) These brethren, as soon as they knew of his release from prison, would very naturally resort to his lodgings, where he gave them his farewell benediction, and departed.

But we know there were brethren in the house of Lydia, who were neither her sons nor servants. "We read in this chapter, verse 3, Paul would have Timothy 'to go forth with him;' and no doubt but Timothy did go forth with him; and they, that is, Paul, Silas, and Timothy, went through the cities: they came by Mysia—to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul—and after he had seen the vision, we [I, Luke, the writer, being one] endeavoured to go into Macedonia. We came to Samothracia—to Philippi—'and we were in that city certain days.' 'And on the sabbaths, we went out to the Proseucha—we sat down, and spake to the women—Lydia constrained us to come to her house, and abide there.' Now, who were this we, and this us, if not, 1. Paul, 2. Silas, 3. Timothy, and 4. Luke? The whole company, being four, lodged at Lydia's. 'And it came to pass, as we went to prayer—a damsel having a spirit of divination, met us, and followed Paul and us—many days.' Her masters

caught Paul and Silas:—consequently Timothy and Luke remained at Lydia's. And when Paul and Silas were delivered from prison, they went to their abode at Lydia's, and there met 'the brethren' Timothy and Luke, from whom they had been separated one night."*

Still it will be urged, There is no positive proof that there were infants in the family of Lydia. True; but here is positive proof of the baptism of children, and of the baptism of a family of children, mentioned in connexion with the baptism of their parent, without a hint being dropped respecting their faith, conversion, or consent; though the account contains a detail of the parent's conversion, in such a way, that their conversion could not well have escaped notice, had it actually taken place. We have seen that the presumptive evidence is in favour of the junior branches of the family being very young; but the point of importance is, to give an example of the baptism of a believers' child, without either faith or piety being required as a condition, or so much as hinted at, as an accompaniment. On this question, the age of a child is of no consequence whatever; the reason of the thing making it quite as lawful to baptize an infant, as a child of any age, without faith.

It will not, I presume, be contended by the baptists, that any adults were baptized, of whose faith we have not good proof; for this would destroy the whole fabric of believers' baptism. When, therefore, we find children baptized, of whose faith we have no proof at all; the conclusion is inevitable, that children were not baptized by the apostles on the same ground as adults. If the sacred writers have taken care to apprise us of the previous faith of all the adults who received baptism, in order that succeeding ministers might not mistake in giving the ordinance to an adult unbeliever; did it not equally behove them, if they required the same qualification in children, to use the same care in

* Facts and Evidences—in three addit. Let., p. 40.

notifying their faith with the record of their reception of the ordinance? and as, in fact, they have not done this, does it not necessarily follow, that faith in children is not a necessary qualification?

But, say some, the children of Lydia might be adult believers, for the text does not say they were not. Ay! and they might be like lord Monboddo's men, having tails projecting from their posteriors; for the text does not say they had not! If we are at liberty to impute to scripture characters everything that is not denied of them, where shall we stop? To be sure, if any text had said that no child ought to be baptized before it becomes a believer, we should, on the credit of such a text, admit that all the children baptized by the apostles, were believers at the time, though their faith were not mentioned in the account of their baptism. But faith is never, in the New Testament, made a condition of the ordinance.

With respect to the family of Lydia, there is not only no account of their faith, or piety, but strong presumptive evidence that they had neither. The writer has detailed the conversion of the mother, as well as recorded her baptism; and had the children been converted too, he could not well have avoided some notice of it.

The history stands thus: "And on the sabbath days we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us." (Acts xvi. 13—15.

"The first remark on this passage is, that, so far as it refers to Lydia, it is throughout, in the singular number: her heart was opened,—her's only; not to

believe, but to attend to the things spoken: she besought us,—saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful;—come into my house: and she constrained us. No mention is made of any one of her family, in conjunction with herself:—no allusion to any such occurs. She does not say, ‘gentlemen, come into our house: we will endeavour to make it as agreeable to you as we can.’ Nothing of this; neither is any person of her family marked as attending to the discourses of Paul:—nor as resorting with her to this Proseucha, where Paul discoursed.

“In fact, we should never have known that she had a family, were they not incidentally mentioned, as accompanying her in baptism: ‘And when she was baptized, with her family.’ Insert *her* baptism, we find her *family*: omit *her* baptism, she has no family recorded: the act of her baptism cannot be separated from that of her family. Now, if her family were of mature age, capable of attention to the word spoken, how is it, that they are not mentioned together with her, as *attending*, since they are mentioned together with her as *receiving* baptism? How is it, that they, having received baptism together with her, do not concur in her invitation of their spiritual fathers? Their non-age, only, can explain this. And, this,—that those who are not marked as having attended to the word, should nevertheless be marked as receiving baptism, has appeared to the baptists themselves so unaccountable, that they have taken different ways to account for it; which, after all, they have not accomplished; for a clearer instance to warrant the baptism of those (children) who have not attended to the word preached, there cannot be. In like manner, they have taken different ways to characterize the brethren mentioned, in verse 40. ‘They were sons of Lydia,’ say some,—but scripture says nothing of her having any sons.”*

The case of the jailer, recorded in the same chapter,

* Facts and Evidences, in three addit. Let., p. 39.

must next be considered. "He said," to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (Acts xvi. 30—34.

A baptist will immediately suggest to me, if all the family of the jailer received the ordinance, they are all noticed as believers; the account, therefore, he thinks, is more favourable to his cause, than to ours.

The word *panoiki*, "with all his house," is connected with his rejoicing, and not with his believing. *Egalliasato panoiki pepisteukos to Theo*, "He rejoiced with all his house, believing, or, having believed in God." The original, answering to the words, with all his house, is but one word, an adverb. We have not a single English word which will properly and fully express the meaning of *panoiki*. Some have rendered it, housely; others, domestically. The plain meaning of the passage is, "He rejoiced at the head of his family, having believed in God." Here is no proof whatever of the children's faith, but only of the father's. This is another example of a family of children being baptized, at the same time with their parent, without a word being said as to their spiritual qualifications, although the conversion and faith of their parent are related at large. Had the children been really converted along with their father, some notice of it could not well have escaped the sacred writer in his account of the change wrought in the mind of their father; especially as he has not forgotten to relate their baptism along with his. As the matter stands, the jailer's baptism is explained by the information, that he believed in God, washed the stripes of God's ministers, and set meat before them; but we have no explana-

tion of the baptism of the children, unless we can find it in the faith of their parent: this, and this only, solves the difficulty; and to find this solution we do not travel out of the record.

As to whether there were infants in this family, nothing certain can be affirmed on either side; and for reasons already assigned, it is of no moment to inquire. If the faith of the father be a sufficient reason for the baptism of a child of six or ten years old, it must be a sufficient reason for the baptism of an infant.

But in this case, as well as in the last, the circumstances strongly support the conclusion, that there were infants in the family. The word *all*, is applied to them, and "scripture uses this word to import many—numerous: the application of this word to families, deserves notice. There is no occasion to quote such passages as 'all the world is gone after him;' 'all the world wondered after the beast:' it imports many, in lesser numbers; as 'his mother, Mary, and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, and his sisters, are they not all with us?' Admitting an equal number of sisters as of brethren, it makes eight; a large, or numerous family. The story of the believing jailer, deserves close examination; for, if we investigate it, we shall find that he could not be an old man; but rather in the hey-day of life. His first intention after the earthquake—'he drew his sword, and would have killed himself'—is not the character of age, which usually takes events more coolly, and is much more deliberate in its determinations. The action is that of a fervid mind. In like manner, 'he called for lights, and sprang in:' the original well expresses the strenuous action of a robust body; of a man in the vigour of life: here is no decrepitude; no old age, with creeping steps, doing its utmost to advance with some rapidity: it is the vehement burst of a man in his full strength: yet this man had a numerous family. He appears to have been a soldier:—soldiers seldom marry very early in life: his numerous family,

then, according to nature, must have contained young children.”*

Suppose his family rejoiced with him, there might still be infants in it. “Have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?”

An objection is founded on verse 32, “And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house,” They would not preach, it is said, to infants; and since they spake to all in the house there could be no infants in it.

Suppose a minister preaching to a large assembly from Romans iii. 23—24. He lays great stress upon the word all, and insists upon it more than once, in his application, that all present, (all that are in the house,) have sinned against God, in thought, word, and deed; and exhorts very earnestly all of them who have not obtained justification through faith in Christ, to apply to the Saviour without delay. The discourse is printed. Some time afterward, certain circumstances make it very important to ascertain whether Mr. Such-a-one’s infant was taken to church that day. An old lady, who sat in the next pew, is almost positive she saw it in the mother’s lap. Another cannot recollect seeing it, and believes it was not there. A witty rogue desires them to be silent for a minute, and he will prove, from the sermon, that the infant could not be present. “You will please to observe,” says he, “the minister says in this discourse, ‘All present have sinned against God in thought, word, and deed.’ But you all know an infant could not have sinned in thought, word, and deed; it follows that, since all the congregation had thus sinned, there could not have been an infant among them. Again, he says, ‘I earnestly exhort all present, who have not obtained justification through faith in Christ, to apply to the Saviour, without delay.’ Suppose an infant were present, it, of course, was not justified by faith;

* Facts and Evidences, in a second Let., pp. 30—32.

it must, therefore, be included among the all, whom he exhorted to seek the Saviour. But a gentleman of his learning, discrimination, and piety, would not exhort an infant; who could not understand a word he said, to seek salvation. You may, therefore, rest perfectly satisfied that no infant entered the church door that day! Q. E. D."

We know it is customary with some parents to take their infants with them to public worship. We know it is also customary to say, "The minister addressed the congregation upon such a subject." Would it not be ridiculous to say, "He addressed the whole congregation, except infants and idiots?" Would not the man be taken for an idiot who should think it necessary to express these exceptions? A more puerile objection was never started.

But though this verse makes nothing for our baptist brethren, it furnishes a powerful argument against them. The term rendered house, in this verse, is not the same that is used in verses 31, 34; it is *oikia*, and is of larger signification than *oikos*. In verse 31, the persons of which the family consisted is intended.—the parent and children; in verse 34, *oikos* denotes that part of the premises which was occupied by the family. The *oikia* in verse 32, includes the whole of the premises; the buildings occupied by the servants and prisoners, as well as those appropriated to the use of the family.* The distinction between the two words is sufficiently marked in this passage: "They spake the word of the Lord to all that were in the *oikia*." And where did they speak to them? Not out of doors, to be sure; for we read of its being midnight, and of lights being called for: preaching and baptizing were in the *oikia*; and after these were over, we read that the jailer brought Paul and Silas into his *oikos*. But how could he bring them into his *oikos* at the conclusion of these services, if both were per-

* See the distinction between these two words, and their application to this controversy, discussed in a masterly manner, in Mr. Taylor's "Facts and Evidences on the Subject of Baptism."

formed in it? The religious services were undoubtedly performed in the prison; and as all that were in the *oikia*, upon the premises, are marked as being present at the preaching, this all, must include the servants and prisoners, with the family.

Now I wish the baptists would consider this seriously:—though the servants and prisoners together, must have amounted to several persons; and though the family, as we have seen, was undoubtedly numerous; yet we do not read of any one besides him and all his being baptized. If we suppose, with a baptist, that the whole of the jailer's family were converted under this sermon, it would be one of the most singular circumstances which the history of the church has furnished, that the work of conversion should stop just there; not one of his numerous family left; not one of all the rest taken. Allow the children were baptized on the ground of their father's faith, and all the mystery and difficulty of the passage vanish.

But if the baptists will still contend, in opposition to all the probabilities of the case, and in spite of the absence of all evidence in their favour, that these children had all faith prior to their baptism, I have a few observations to make. 1. Admitting they did believe, it does not follow that theirs was justifying faith. There was not time allowed to give evidence of this. The baptism took place "the same hour of the night" on which the earthquake happened. We read of the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep; from which it appears that the family had retired to rest. Now consider for a moment what was done in this single hour. The family and servants would have to dress; they were all in the dark, and had to wait till a light was procured; the family, servants, and prisoners, must be all brought together for the purpose of hearing the word of the Lord. All these things would require time: say, a quarter of an hour, at the least. They could not believe before they were instructed. How long would it require, to explain the nature of justifying faith to a large family

of pagan children, who had probably never before heard the name of Christ mentioned? Could half an hour suffice for this? I am sure a quarter of an hour would be little enough to allow for an explanation of the nature and design of baptism, and for the administration of it to a numerous family. Now supposing the heavenly mission of Christ could be proved, and the doctrine of justification explained, within half an hour, so that such ignorant persons could be made to understand them; their baptism must have taken place immediately on their perception and belief of these great truths; there was, therefore, absolutely no time for the production of evidences.

When people talk of the apostles administering baptism on a probable profession of faith and piety, what do they mean? There is scarcely a possibility in the case under consideration. We cannot avail ourselves here of the common observation, that God can do a great work in a little time; because human means were used. What minister of the gospel, by half an hour's teaching of a family of idolaters, who were perfectly ignorant of christianity, could give them such a view of the doctrines of religion, as would be necessary to enable them to believe in Christ for justification? He would have to prove to them the messiahship of Jesus; he would have to explain the fall of man, the moral law of God, the impossibility of justification by our own works and the doctrines of the atonement and faith. I feel no hesitation in saying, that no man is competent to such a task, in so short a period. And I put it to the conscience of a baptist minister, whether he would "straightway" baptize a whole heathen family in similar circumstances. Suppose he were spending a night with a family of idolaters who were all perfectly ignorant of christianity. About midnight, a dreadful earthquake awakens and terrifies the whole household. They all rise, and the master of the house springs into the room to the minister, trembles, falls down before him, and exclaims, "O, Sir! what must I do to be saved?" I can readily conceive that the minister

would speak to him and all present about their souls, Christ, and salvation : but would he, however willing they might be, baptize the master and all his children, "that same hour of the night?" He knows he would not. He would probably argue the case thus : "These idolaters are as superstitious as they are ignorant. Anything a little extraordinary alarms them. When the fright is over, they will probably have no wish to become christians. Let them wait awhile, and I shall see whether they will stand. I have no evidence that they are the subjects of a work of grace : their present concern may be owing to the earthquake, and will not probably long survive it. But if the Lord has spoken to their hearts, by this earthquake, they must submit to a preparatory course of instruction, for at least a few weeks, before they receive the ordinance : we never give it so soon, nor at so unseasonable an hour. Besides, there is a church in the place, consisting of a pious woman and her family ; and I cannot add this family to the church, without the church's consent ; the church must be consulted, and have an account of their religious experience : and I cannot bring the matter before the church, at this untimely hour of the night. Further : we maintain that there is to be a public profession of Christ in baptism ; the church and the world must witness the ceremony ; but that is impossible at this hour of the night."

Here then are four reasons, drawn from the avowed principles of the baptist, why a baptist minister would not have baptized the jailer and his family, as the apostle did, after about half an hour's teaching. (1.) He would not have deemed them sufficiently instructed. (2.) They could not have furnished the required evidences of their being the subjects of a gracious and saving heavenly influence. (3.) The concurrence of the church could not be had. And (4.) There was no opportunity for a public profession of christianity.

Upon pedobaptist principles there are no difficulties in this case. The desire of the father, we should think a sufficient reason for the baptism of both himself and

family. We would instruct them well in the mysteries of the kingdom, after their initiation. We should not puzzle ourselves, for a moment, in inquiring after evidences of grace, as a qualification for the ordinance; we should be quite satisfied, and very thankful, if these evidences made their appearance afterwards. We should never think of consulting the church, or subjecting the candidate to such an inquisition. And we should feel so contented with the presence of God, the minister and the subjects, that we would not so much as whistle for any others to be present, even if that were enough to bring the world together.

Now when the apostolic practice stands opposed, in some important particulars, to the principles of one class of professors, and is in perfect accordance with all the principles of another, it cannot be very difficult to determine, which of the two denominations is in the right.

2. A second consideration is, If we admit the children had faith, it does not follow that they were adults. Our Saviour, we have seen, called little children believers; the jailer's children, therefore, might be believers, and yet be very young.

Under the old dispensation, little ones were admitted full members of the church; entered personally into covenant with God; ate of the most holy things in his temple, and actually ministered before him in the priest's office: and, under the new dispensation, they believed in Christ, and praised God, not only acceptably, but perfectly. Is it not a little singular, in the face of these facts; for a baptist to infer, when religious acts are ascribed to children, that adult children must be intended.

The examples from the Old Testament cannot be set aside on the pretence, that they are not gospel precedents; because the question relates to the physical and mental capabilities of little children. The usual objection is, How can infants do so and so? We reply, The how is not the question, but the fact, whether they be really capable of performing certain acts or not? Now

if I can produce examples in support of the affirmative, it matters not a jot whether they be ancient or modern: nor what dispensation the little ones lived under; whether pratriarchal, Mosaic, or christian. Since it is admitted that the capabilities of little ones have undergone no change from the period when the first of these examples lived, to the present hour; children, about three years of age, are as competent to enter into covenant with God now, as they were under the Jewish ceremony; and a christian child of the same age, is just as capable of believing in God and holding communion with him, as was the child Samuel. But gospel precedents of little ones in arms believing in Christ, and praising him, it might be presumed are unexceptionable.

When a baptist inquires, how can these things be? My answer is, I can see no mystery in them: but if they were perfectly inexplicable, he is not on that account at liberty to reject them. Will he admit nothing in religion as a fact, upon divine authority, which he cannot explain? A baptist may contest the reality of these alleged facts as warmly as he pleases; but if he cannot overturn them, he is not at liberty to reject them, merely because he feels a difficulty in accounting for them. When we have adopted sentiments which stand opposed to undoubted facts, those sentiments must be erroneous, and ought to be given up. Let the baptists only admit the facts in question, and they will no longer insist upon it, when they find religious acts ascribed to children, such as believing, praising God, etc., that children of adult age must be intended. On the baptist supposition, therefore, that the children of the jailer were believers, the baptist inference, that they were adults, is not at all supported; and the probabilities in favour of some of them being infants and little ones, arising from the evident indications that the father was not aged, and that the family was numerous, is not at all diminished.

It may be proper here to notice the baptists' classification of children, which has produced much confu-

sion in this controversy. They divide children into only two classes,—infants and adults. Is this correct? Is a child an adult the moment it ceases to be an infant? To what age does infancy extend? Some say we are infants, till we begin to talk; others say, till seven years old; in some civil matters, infancy is protracted to twelve or fourteen years; in law, a person is considered an infant till he is twenty one; and in Spain and Portugal, all the sons and daughters of the sovereign, except the eldest, are called infants all their days. There was nearly as much latitude in the use of the word among the ancients; and this shows the folly of those who think, that if the baptism of infants had but been mentioned in scripture, the controversy would have been decided. Nothing would be easier than for a baptist to produce evidence of the application of this word by the ancients, to persons of any age from the period of birth to manhood; and he would insist upon it, in his usual way of arguing, that the text must denote a person from fourteen to twenty years of age; and then the dispute is just where it was. Now the term *oikos*, "family," has much more weight in it, because it takes in children of all ages; and because when the whole of a numerous family is marked as baptized, and especially when the father does not appear to be beyond middle age, it is nearly certain that some of the children must be very young.

People do not, however, generally, I believe, especially in common discourse, extend the period of infancy beyond three years; and yet no one calls a child of four years old, an adult. Most people understand by an adult, a person who has arrived at years of maturity; one who is grown up; and yet we are not in the habit of calling all persons infants, indiscriminately, who have not attained to manhood. If we adopt the common idea, that infancy ends at about three years of age; and, to bring down the idea as low as we can, suppose the child becomes an adult as early as fourteen, there is an intermediate space of eleven years lost sight of; and this is generally as important as any

other period of human life, of the same length, as it respects the formation of character. The conduct of the adult is very often the fruit produced by seeds sown in childhood. Are the little ones to be kept out of the church during this interesting period?

It will be said that the age of the child is not the great point; but its faith. In the Baptist Magazine for January, 1814, there is an article signed, J. R., (Dr. Ryland, it is believed,) in which it is said, "As soon as children can give evidence of repentance and faith, we are ready to baptize them. A lad of twelve years old was baptized along with me; and I was last week reading a sermon preached by Dr. Baldwin, at the ordination of Mr. Chaplin of New York, who was hopefully converted at ten years of age, and baptized at eleven." Query. Are these cases of adult baptism?

This passage is remarkable on many accounts. It appeared in the adopted interpreter of the baptists' opinions, and was written by a minister justly admired for his piety and learning.

He avows that as soon as children can give evidence of repentance and faith, baptist ministers are ready to baptize them. As the two examples immediately follow this declaration, I understand they are adduced as proofs of it. Had the Doctor been acquainted with any instances of the administration of the ordinance, by his brethren, to children still younger, no doubt, but he would have produced them, as they would have afforded still better evidence of the truth of the previous assertion. But it seems pretty evident that the good man had some difficulty in finding even two such young subjects of the ordinance, when he had to sail across the Atlantic for one of them. I have made some inquiry among the baptists of my acquaintance, and they have not been able to supply me with one example of a person receiving the ordinance in their churches, at so early an age. But if the baptists really do baptize children as soon as they can give evidence of repentance and faith; and if, in fact, they do not baptize children before they are eleven or

twelve years old, and consider even these as extraordinary cases ; it necessarily follows, that in the judgment of baptists, children cannot give evidence of repentance and faith prior to that age, and very few can give it so soon. Who but a baptist can adopt this conclusion.

According to our brethren, then, the youngest child of the jailer must have been at least eleven years of age. For since all his were baptized, it would follow, that if one of them was under eleven, this one was baptized before it could give evidence of repentance and faith; and this would ruin the whole cause of adult or believers' baptism. And yet, on the other hand, the older you suppose the youngest child in this family to be, the more you increase some other difficulties. As the father appears to have been in the meridian of life, and yet to have had a numerous family, it is utterly improbable that the youngest should be eleven.

But let us examine the American example a little more particularly. The person, it is said, was "hopefully converted at ten years of age, and baptized at eleven." Now how does this square with the assertion, that as soon as children give evidence of repentance and faith they are baptized? A year elapsed between the conversion and baptism of this child; and yet this is a notable instance, worth sending for to America, of children being baptized as soon as they give evidence of repentance and faith!

If it be said, that the delay of a year took place in order to furnish evidence of the reality of the work, I answer, the narrative says the child was hopefully converted at ten; and there could be no hope when the child was ten years old, of the reality of its conversion, if there were not some evidence of it. One of the two examples then, which was to prove that children are baptized by our brethren as soon as they give evidence of conversion, proves the direct contrary.

If it be contended that the evidence at ten years of

age, though hopeful, was not perfectly decisive; this only shows how opposition to the baptism of infants and little children begets jealousy, when anything good appears in them. How contrary to the precept of the apostle, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." And how contrary to the practice of the apostle. The baptists suppose the jailer's children were all converted before their baptism. If that were the case, it has been proved, indeed the text asserts it, that the ordinance succeeded "straightway," that is, immediately. Their conversion, therefore, at the time of their baptism, could only be in a very low sense of the word hopeful; and yet the apostle did not wait for evidence a year, or a month, or a week, or a day, or an hour.

If the baptists say, they do not deny but children may be eligible to baptism before they are eleven, I will be obliged to them to give me a few examples of their giving the ordinance at an earlier period; when they have done this, I shall find it much easier to prove that they practice infant baptism, than they will to prove that they baptize none but adults. If they can produce no examples of an earlier administration of the ordinance, their practice will prove that they do not consider children under eleven, as fit members of the church of Christ. This is going considerably farther than denying infant baptism, as the word infant is usually understood; and the consequences of such a sentiment, it is shown in another place, are serious. And cannot children be religious before they are ten? And are they to be taught, that God will not grant them his grace, nor the church her privileges, prior to that period? If they may be religious, and the church ought to receive them sooner; how happens it that the baptists keep them out of their church till eleven, or twelve, and generally, till twenty and upwards? Contrast our brethren's delay with the early admissions of the apostles: see the one lingering for a year in search of further evidence, after a hopeful conversion has taken place, while the other does not wait an hour;

and it must be sufficiently evident, that the apostles administered the ordinance upon principles widely different from those which the baptists have adopted.

Where do the apostles say a word, or drop a hint, about the production of evidence of repentance and faith, to entitle any one to the rite? The fact is, as has been abundantly proved, they gave the ordinance, not because the subject had religion, but in order that he might acquire it.

This principle explains the apostle's practice, in baptizing adults, immediately on their believing the heavenly mission of Jesus, and all their children at the same time; it exactly agrees with our practice also; and it stands diametrically opposed to the practice of our brethren.

3. A third consideration, on the baptists' supposition, that the jailer's children had saving faith at the time of their baptism, is this: It represents the promise made to the father, respecting the salvation of his family, as fulfilled within an hour; and I do not see how a baptist can contend for this, and yet deny that there is anything special in the promise. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy family," that is, say some, if thy children believe, they shall be saved, as well as thyself. Does not a promise of the end include in it a promise of the means leading to that end? And where is the baptists' *if*, about the faith of these children, when he insists upon it that they were all believers, in fact, prior to their baptism? Let him explain if he can, how it was that all the jailer's children, and not one of his servants or prisoners, should become believers under the preaching of Paul and Silas, if there were nothing special in the promise respecting his children? What better proof of the promise bearing a more gracious aspect to his children than to others, can be desired or given, than the fact, that though many others heard the discourse as well as they, the whole of the children, and not one of all the rest, should believe and be saved?

It will not solve the difficulty to suppose that the

children, by their previous education, might be better fitted to receive the gospel than the servants and prisoners; because the character of their father forbids such a supposition. When Paul and Silas were committed to his custody, he was "charged to keep them safely." He might have done this, and yet have treated them with humanity. But to mark the brutality of his disposition, it is added, "Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks." After he was brought into trouble respecting his soul, "he washed their stripes, and set meat before them;" which shows that when in his natural state, he had neglected these offices of humanity. So hard hearted a wretch would not use a course of family instruction and discipline, at all adapted to the genius of the christian religion.

But if it be admitted that the promise is special, then one of the principal arguments of the baptists against infant baptism, namely, the uncertainty whether the children of believing parents, if brought up in the Lord, will become truly pious, is overthrown.

But though I do not believe, for the reasons already assigned, that the children of the jailer were converted prior to their baptism, I am in no doubt at all respecting their becoming true believers, provided their parent, to whom the promise was made, discharged those domestic duties which the christian religion imposes upon all its professors who have families. Every parent, as will be shown in the proper place, who claims the promise in behalf of his children, is obliged by the christian covenant which contains the promise, to use certain means; and to expect the accomplishment of the promise, while the prescribed means are neglected, is presumption, which will probably be punished with disappointment. It is in the discharge of those duties which a parent owes to his children, that God gives his blessing; and nothing can be a greater encouragement to parental exertions than the assurance, that these efforts shall be crowned with success.

On what ground then were the jailer's children baptized? The narrative is entirely silent on the subject of their faith and conversion; but it furnishes an explanation, with which we ought to be satisfied. We have only to compare two passages in the history, and the whole affair will be clear enough. The jailer is directed to believe; and a promise is annexed, that he and his family shall be saved. Now what did he do? We read, "He believed in God." And what followed this? "He was baptized, and all his, straight-way." Here observe, that the salvation of himself and family is connected with his faith, in the first instance, and the baptism of himself and family is connected with his faith, in the second. Not a word is said of the faith of the family in either. Why was the father baptized on his believing? That the promise respecting his salvation might be carried into effect: "Be baptized for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." "Of his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church." In these and many other similar passages, baptism is represented as introductory to those means and privileges which are necessary to salvation. As the promise of salvation was annexed to his faith, he no sooner believed, than he was baptized, in order that the promise might be carried into effect. But the promise of the salvation of his family was also annexed to his faith; and, therefore, there were exactly the same reasons for their baptism as for his own.

Here then we have a full explanation of the baptism of these children. They were baptized on the ground of their father's faith, because the promise of their salvation is connected with his faith. That which is a sufficient foundation for the promise of salvation, must be a sufficient foundation for the rite of baptism; and as the faith of the parent brought his little ones under the

promise, his faith was enough to entitle them to the ordinance. To promise the salvation of children, and to deny them the ordinance which is introductory to the means and privileges necessary to carry the promise into effect, is a contradiction.

With the promise warm upon his heart, the jailer could feel no baptist scruples about the baptism of his children; such as, "It is quite uncertain whether my children will be religious—I cannot give them grace—they will probably pollute the purity of the church, and disgrace the cause of Christ," etc. Such reveries would never enter his mind: he would rather say, "The men of God inform me that my family shall be saved; I will therefore enter them as scholars by the rite of baptism into the school of Christ; I will have nothing more to do with idols; I and my house will serve the Lord; I will take my children to the house of God, and they shall be taught the science of salvation; I will bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; I will rule my house well; I shall have faithful children; my family shall be saved."

Having ascertained that the faith of a parent is a sufficient warrant for the baptism of his children, the question as to their age, on which such uncommon stress has been laid, is a matter of no consequence whatever; for the reason must apply equally to all children, who are subject to parental authority.

The case of Cornelius and his family has been considered at large, and, therefore, may be dismissed, in a few words. The angel made a promise to him, respecting the salvation of his children, similar to that made by Paul and Silas to the jailer. That the children of Cornelius, as well as his friends and relatives, were present to hear the address of Peter, no one can doubt; and as the apostle commanded all who were present to be baptized, this is a third example of a baptized family. All the probabilities here, as has been remarked, are in proof of the junior members of the family being very young. Their being present at the preaching of the apostle, and their reception of

the Holy Spirit, afford no presumption to the contrary.

The baptism of the family of Stephanas is recorded 1 Corinthians i. 16: "I baptized also the household," *oikos*, "house," or "family," "of Stephanas." Our baptist friends, however, very confidently claim the family as supporters of believers' baptism, from what is said of it towards the close of this epistle. "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." It is said that infants could not labour in the ministry, nor perform service to the saints, nor have any claim to the submission of the Corinthian church.

All this is readily granted; and yet it is contended there might be, and probably were, infants in the family of Stephanas, at the time of their baptism. Consider,—

1. The account of Stephanas and his household is put by our translators in a parenthesis. It is introduced here abruptly and unnaturally: "I beseech you brethren—ye know the house of Stephanas," etc. Mr. Taylor, in his *Facts and Evidences*, supposes that the notice of Stephanas and his household, was a marginal note in the apostle's epistle, and was transferred into the body of the text by some subsequent transcriber. He has assigned, what strike me as unanswerable reasons why the Corinthian church was not required to submit to the household of Stephanas, but to Timothy and Apollos, whom in the preceding verses the apostle had exhorted the church to receive. And indeed by reading the statement of the household of Stephanas, in a parenthesis, as we have it in our translation, this interpretation appears the most natural. All then which the passage attributes to the household of Stephanas is, that they addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, that is, to do service to the saints.

2. This service done to the saints is not marked as prior to their baptism, and as a proof of their being qualified for it. It is important here to ascertain when they were baptized, and how long it was after their baptism that the apostle ascribes this service to them. As to the first particular,—the household of Stephanas were the first fruits of Achaia; they were members of the Corinthian church, and the apostle baptized the family. (1 Cor. i. 14—16. We have seen in the cases of Lydia and the jailer, that he baptized families immediately on their parents believing in Christ; no instance or hint to the contrary can be produced. The inference is, that Stephanas and his household were the first baptized members of the Corinthian church. We learn from Acts xviii. that a church was formed at Corinth, at the commencement of the apostle's ministry in that city. Macknight fixes the period of the apostle's arrival at Corinth to be the summer of the year 51. About this time, then, the household of Stephanas, marked as the first fruits of this church, were baptized. Pearson, Mill, and Macknight, date the first epistle to the Corinthians in the year 57, and the two latter, in the beginning of that year. A period of near six years, then, it appears, intervened between the baptism of this household, and the writing of the epistle which bears testimony to their service. Now where is the proof that the children of Stephanas were either adults, or pious, at the time they received the ordinance?

There was sufficient time for the family to receive the Holy Spirit, and bring forth his gracious fruits, between their baptism and the writing of this epistle. The Holy Spirit was generally given soon after baptism. (Acts viii. 14—17; xix. 5, 6.) If there were infants in the family, they would receive the Spirit as well as the rest; for it has been proved that the promise of the Spirit in Acts ii. 39, includes infants. The holy training of the parent, and the society of the saints, (and they must have had this society, or they could not have ministered to the saints,) com-

bined with the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, sufficiently account for the piety of the children at the time the apostle wrote; without supposing they were pious prior to their baptism. The act of piety attributed to them by the apostle, is that of ministering to the saints; but since he has noticed them as the first members of the Corinthian church, there were no saints to minister to, prior to their own baptism; not another word therefore need be said upon this point.

The edge of the objection, that there were no infants in this family to baptize, because infants cannot minister to the saints, is taken off by the fact, that nearly six years intervened between their baptism, and this eulogy upon their piety. Now suppose an infant in the family, two years and a half old, at the time the ordinance was given, it would be about eight when the apostle wrote; and could not this child wait upon a saint? I have gone into thousands of pious families, within the last twenty years, and never found any more ready and more pleased to wait upon me, than little ones about this age; and I should deem it ungrateful, if not wicked, in mentioning the kind attentions I have received, to except these affectionate juveniles.

There is strong probability that there were infants in the family of Stephanas, at the time of this baptism. It appears from 1 Corinthians xvi. 17, that Stephanas was one of the deputies from the church at Corinth, who carried the bounty of the brethren to the apostle at Ephesus, and by whom this epistle was transmitted to them. It is not likely that an infirm old man would be sent on such an errand, and to so great a distance as from Corinth to Ephesus. But if he was not old at this time, we must not forget that he was nearly six years younger when his children were baptized; and if he was not past middle age at that time, it is scarcely to be supposed that his family was grown up.

There are three instances of a family being styled a church: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila—and the church

that is in their (*oikon*) family." "Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their (*oikon*) family." "Salute Nymphas, and the church which is in his (*oikon*) family." "Paul, unto Philemon, and to the church in thy (*oikon*) family." (Rom. xvi. 3, 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Col. iv. 15; Phil. 1, 2.)

Whitby, on these texts, has shown that Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, and all the Greek scholiasts, understood the apostle in these passages, to speak of families, and to include the whole of the families mentioned. Macknight, on the first of these texts, says, "The expression may signify, that all the members of their family were christians. For Origen tells us, when a whole family was converted, the salutation was sent to the church in such a house; but when a part of a family only was converted, the salutation was directed to those in the family who were in the Lord, ver. 11, or to the brethren with them, ver. 14, or to all the saints with them, ver. 15." I hope it will be conceded to these Greek fathers, that they understood the meaning of a plain Greek word.

But if we admit, say some, that these are examples of a whole family being formed into a church, there is nothing said respecting their baptism. True; and there was no occasion for it. The sacred writers have informed us that baptism was the rite of initiation into the church. The baptists not only admit, but contend for this order. When, therefore, we have proved to them the church membership of children, we have proved their baptism. If they were to allow of membership without baptism, what is there in baptism which deserves a moment's controversy? Here then are three more entire families that received the ordinance. Nothing is said of the piety of these children; which is the more remarkable, because Aquila and Priscilla, and Philemon, the heads of two of the families, are commended highly on account of their christian virtues. Had the children been truly religious, the apostle could not well have avoided noticing

it in some way, in connexion with what he has said of their parents.

Acts xvii. 8 : " And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his (*oiko*) family ; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." There can be no doubt but the children of Crispus were baptized, as well as the other believing Corinthians. He, and his family, are not particularized here from the body of believers to mark an exception with respect to their baptism, but on account of their great respectability : " Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue." Crispus and his family are included in the many Corinthians who believed ; they are, therefore, necessarily included in the same many who were baptized.

In 1 Corinthians i. 14, the apostle states that he baptized Crispus, but says nothing of the baptism of his family. But it is common with the sacred writers, when they have occasion to relate the same thing more than once, to omit a circumstance in one statement, which they mention in another. We have seen in the instances of Lydia, the jailer, and Stephanas, that the apostle was in the habit of baptizing children along with their parents ; and no baptist, it is presumed, will object to the baptism of the family of Crispus, since they are noted as believers.

I know it will be objected, that since the children of Crispus were believers, they strengthen the cause of adult baptism. I answer, that does not follow. Jesus Christ declared little ones, children in arms, to be believers. Some of Crispus's children might, therefore, be infants. The family appears to have been numerous, as the word *all* is applied to it ; and there are not many large families without an infant in them.

The family of Onesiphorus is mentioned twice by the apostle, in such a way as to mark it as a christian family. " The Lord give mercy unto the (*oiko*) family of Onesiphorus ; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain." " Salute the (*oikon*) family of Onesiphorus." (2 Tim. i. 16 ; iv. 19.) The father

was not at home at this time, as there is no salutation to him. And is it probable, that in the absence of their father, these children would be the subjects of apostolic prayers and salutations, and be recommended to the pastoral visits of Timothy, if they did not belong to the church? It was the custom of the apostles, as has been proved at large, to baptize persons as soon as they believed in the messiahship of Jesus. If these children did not believe, they would not thank Paul for his salutation, nor Timothy for delivering it. This family resided at Ephesus. They did not worship in the temple of Diana, but in the house of God. The affectionate intercourse which subsisted between these children and the ministers of Christ, proves they were a truly christian family. The apostle exhorted christian parents to bring up their children in the Lord. Onesiphorus had done so. And this is one of the great advantages resulting from the baptism of infants. By an early consecration to the Redeemer, they are trained up in the discipline as well as doctrine of the Lord; they are preserved from the contagion of the world; they become united in the bonds of christian friendship with the ministers and servants of Christ; they enjoy the prayers, as well as the care, of the church, and these means will seldom fail of being blessed to their salvation.

(Rom. xvi. 10.) The apostle greets the household of Aristobulus; and though the word *oikos* is not used, both Doddridge and Macknight render the passage, "Salute those who are of the family of Aristobulus." For reasons stated above, this was unquestionably a baptized family.

The apostle John inscribes his second epistle "unto the elect lady and her children, whom," says he, "I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth. Some have supposed that all this lady's family were not christians, because it is said in verse 4, "I rejoiced greatly that I found of (some of) thy children walking in truth." Macknight remarks, "I rather suppose with Grotius, that John speaks of

such of her children as in the course of their affairs, had come to the place where he was; and that having conversed with them, he had found them sound, both in the faith and in the practice of the gospel." Some of these children, it appears, the apostle knew personally; he had examined them as to their religious attainments, and was satisfied with the proficiency they had made. And the whole family had such a reputation for piety, that all who believed, and knew the truth, loved them.

From the close of this epistle we learn, that this lady had a sister, whose children were all christians, "The children of thy elect sister salute thee." If it be thought that I lay too much stress upon a mere salutation, let the following particulars be considered:—

1. Macknight justly remarks, "The salutations which the christians in the first age gave to each other, were not of the same kind with the salutations of unbelievers, which were wishes of temporal health and felicity only: but they were wishes of health and happiness to their souls, and expressions of the most sincere love. 'Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.' (3 John ii.) The apostle sent this lady the salutation of the children of her excellent sister, to intimate to her, that they were all christians, and that they persevered in the true doctrine of the gospel. Probably they and their mother lived in the city, or place of the country, where the apostle had his residence."

2. These children would not have sent this christian salutation, if they had not been christians themselves.

3. The salutation of these children, sent by an apostle, is a proof of their intimacy with him, and of the mutual affection which subsisted between him and them. Would this eminent servant of Christ have cultivated this close acquaintance with a family of graceless children—idolaters? And had he been willing, would it have suited their disposition to make

him their friend and associate ? Impossible ! Here is a very clear intimation of the existence of the pastoral relation between this man of God, and these pious families. And can any one doubt after this, whether these children were baptized ? especially when we have so many examples of the apostles baptizing persons at the commencement of their christian career, and not one solitary instance of their delaying it for a single day.

These examples, furnished by the apostle John, are important ; because, instead of the word house, or family, used by the apostle Paul, he employs the term children. Many have talked strangely about families without children ; the word then which they have affected to want is furnished. But on second thoughts, I have my fears that these examples will not give perfect satisfaction ; for though children are mentioned here, the word family is wanting. How easy it is for those who are not willing to be convinced to find an objection ; and a poor one is better than none at all.

It is fortunate in another respect, however, that children are expressly named in these examples, because there is no reference to the father, but only to the mother, in either of them ; for had the term family been used, it is to be feared many would have denied that these holy women had any children ; just as they have done in the case of Lydia. It might have been said, " We do not know that these were even married women ; we read nothing of their husbands ; their families, or households, might consist of servants and slaves." But the word children, prevents all such sagacious remarks. And I hope it will be allowed, that Lydia might be married, and have children, as well as these good ladies, though, for some reason or other, the husbands are not noticed.

Let us survey the ground we have travelled over. Here are no less than twelve christian families. Now let the doubter go into any town where he is a stranger ;

let him inquire at the houses in succession as they stand, till he has found twelve with children in them ; I will allow him to make the experiment in a hundred different towns ; and if in any one of them he can find twelve families of children, without any infants among them, I will allow him to say this argument is nothing worth.

Can any man in his sober senses suppose there were no infants in any of these families ? But as the baptists do not give the ordinance to children before they are eleven or twelve years of age, in order to make the baptism of these twelve families comport with their practice, they must suppose that there was not a child to be found in the whole of them under eleven : the odds are millions to one against the truth of this supposition.

A baptist, I know, will hesitate to admit that these twelve families were all baptized ; and it must be granted that the evidence is not equally strong for the whole of them. The baptism of five out of this number is plainly recorded ; namely, the families of Lydia, Stephanas, the jailer, Cornelius, and Crispus ; and the three last were evidently numerous, since the word all is applied to them.

As to the churches in the houses of Aquila and Priscilla, Nymphas, and Philemon, our brethren will contend, that in these passages, the word house is to be taken literally : the church of Rome, they suppose, met in the house of Aquila and Priscilla ; the church at Colosse, met in the house of Nymphas ; and the church with which Philemon was connected, met in his house.

I think this opinion is sufficiently refuted by what I have already said upon the texts. Pool gives two reasons why he believes the houses denote families :
1. The primitive christians were much persecuted ; on which account it was not safe for them to meet regularly in one house, and, therefore, not probable.
2. In the epistle to the Romans, after the salutation to the church, in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, the

apostle salutes a great number of persons ; which would be saluting them twice over, if they were included in the church in the house of this pious pair. To these I will add, 3. The church at Colosse is supposed to have met in the house of Nymphas. Where did Philemon live ? All the commentators say, in Colosse. Macknight remarks, " He was an inhabitant of Colosse, as appears from the epistle to the Colossians, chap. iv. 9, where Onesimus, Philemon's slave, is called one of them. And verse 17, the brethren of Colosse are desired to say to Archippus, (the person mentioned Philem., verse 2,) ' Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received.' Besides, the ancients believed that Philemon was an inhabitant of Colosse. So Theodoret says expressly in his commentary on this epistle ; and tells us that his house was still remaining in Colosse in his time ; that is, in the beginning of the fifth century. And Jerome also in his commentary on this epistle, says, Philemon was of Colosse." The epistles to the Colossians and Philemon were sent at the same time ; because the apostle was in the same circumstances when both were written, he had the same friends with him, and Onesimus was a bearer of both ; as will be seen by a comparison. Now if the church in the house of Nymphas, means all the christians in Colosse, then the church in the house of Philemon, means exactly the same persons. In one of these epistles, according to the baptist interpretation, the christians at Colosse are represented as holding their church meetings in the house of Nymphas ; in the other, as holding them in the house of Philemon. This looks very much like a contradiction. Perhaps it will be said, they might meet sometimes in one house, and sometimes in the other. This does not appear probable : and upon this supposition, the whole church would be saluted twice, in letters written and sent at the same time. 4. In writing to an individual, like Philemon, it may be very proper to desire him to salute the whole church ; but in writing to a church it is very different. He sent an

epistle inscribed, "To all that be in Rome, called to be saints;" and he desired them to salute the church, in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. Now if the church here, mean all the christians in Rome, then he desired them to salute themselves. The same observations will apply to the epistle to the Colossians, in which he desires them to salute the church in the house of Nymphas. To avoid these absurdities, we must take the word house, in these texts, to denote family.

In the church membership of these families, we have as good proof of their baptism, at least in arguing with the baptists, as we should have had, supposing their reception of the ordinance had been expressly named. We can scarcely conceive of a family of not more than two or three persons, being styled a church; and most of the commentators suppose these families were numerous.

Eight of the twelve families then had indisputably received the ordinance; and six out of these appear to have been large families. And where will you find eight such families, which contain neither infants nor little children? But the baptism of the other four families are supported by arguments which I am under no apprehension will be easily overturned.

The natural supposition is, that there would be children in these families, of all ages; and it is just as easy to find infants in them, as it is to find aged persons among the men and women who were baptized. If I were disposed to be querulous, and to deny the lawfulness of baptizing old people, because there is neither precept nor precedent for it in the New Testament, what would a baptist be able to reply? Why he would tell me, that we read of the baptism of men and women; and that men and women of all ages must be intended, since there is no restriction to any particular age. Just so, I say, we read of the baptism of whole families of children; and that children of all ages must be intended, since there is no restriction to any particular age. I am sure you can no more find old age connected with baptism in the New Testament, than infancy.

The family of Crispus believed, and that of Cornelius received the Spirit, prior to baptism; but there is no evidence whatever, that any of the other ten families had either believed, or received the Holy Ghost, before they received the ordinance. The children belonging to some of the other families appear to have been religious, when introduced to our notice as church members: but this is no proof at all that they had religion before they entered the church.

Hitherto our inquiries have related to whole families of children, whose parents are particularly noticed. Besides these, we have evidence of multitudes of little children being in the apostolic churches; and if we can produce them as church members, we shall overturn the principles upon which our baptist brethren act, whether they admit or deny the baptism of these little folks.

I have never yet seen anything like an argument, to prove that the little children, addressed by the apostle John, in his first general epistle, were adults, recently converted. I consider them to have been little children literally, for the following reasons:—

1. Critics are, I believe, generally agreed, that words should be taken in a literal sense, when there is nothing in the nature of the subject, or in the context, which requires a figurative interpretation. I can see nothing connected with the words in question to forbid their being taken literally.

2. Young men and fathers are also addressed in this epistle; and there are good reasons for understanding these words in their literal sense. The young men are said to be strong; which most interpreters take to be an allusion to the vigour of manhood. The following advice is particularly addressed to these young men, though I grant it may also be intended for the little children and fathers: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but

is of the world." Now suppose by young men, the apostle meant persons in the prime of life, and we perceive at once how peculiarly suitable this advice is to them. But if by young men be meant vigorous christians merely; and if by little children be intended adults recently converted; it would have been more appropriate to have addressed this advice more immediately to little children, since a new convert is in much more danger from the world, than an established christian.

The fathers are said to "have known him," Christ, "from the beginning." Many interpreters suppose, that the knowledge of Christ here intended, is a personal acquaintance with him, when he was upon earth; and if so, they must have been persons far advanced in life. But if the young men and fathers are to be interpreted literally, so must the little children.

3. What is said to these little children, seems to have been studiously adapted to persons very young in years. Doddridge has noticed that "there is a remarkable peculiarity in the style of this epistle. The sentences, considered separately, are exceeding clear and intelligible; but when we search for their connexion, we frequently meet with greater difficulties than we do even in the epistles of St. Paul. The principal signature and characteristic of his (John's) manner, is an artless and amiable simplicity, and a singular modesty and candour, in conjunction with a wonderful sublimity of sentiment. His conceptions are apparently delivered to us in the order in which they arose in his own mind, and are not the product of artificial reasoning, or laboured investigation." Now connect with this, which is all very true, the important fact, that nearly the whole of this epistle is addressed immediately to little children; allow these little children to have been young in years, as well as in grace, and all the peculiarities in the apostle's style and manner, which have been rather perplexing to critics, are at once explained and approved.

"His sentences, considered separately, are exceeding clear and intelligible." So they ought to be, for little children to understand them. "But when we search for their connexion, we frequently meet with great difficulties." And well you may; because there is none. A long and artfully connected dissertation is not at all suited to little children. There is in "his manner an artless and amiable simplicity, and a singular modesty and candour." How admirable! to see the venerable saint in the most easy and affectionate manner, leading and feeding the lambs of the flock. There is no "artificial reasoning, or laboured investigation." Because he was not writing to a Boyle, or a Locke, or a Newton; but to children a few years old.

Those who look upon this epistle as intended exclusively for adults, in the different stages of the christian life, form a very low estimate of the apostle's intellectual powers. He is allowed on all hands to have been a very holy man. But what idea is attached to the artless simplicity of his style, when two of his sentences can scarcely be connected together; and when through the whole epistle he neither investigates, nor reasons upon, a single point? Is not such artless simplicity allied in our minds to mental imbecility? But the moment we conceive of him as addressing himself to little children literally, we admire the true greatness of the man of God, who could descend to the level of juvenile minds, become their instructor in the things of God, and exactly adapt his discourse to their capacities.

A careful attention to what is particularly addressed to little children, must, I think, strike every one, that the apostle is speaking to persons young in years. It would detain us too long to examine the whole. Suppose we take at random, as a specimen, the first and the last. "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not." This is quite natural, when spoken to very young people. Here are no reasonings employed, but a simple admonition to avoid sin; just as we are in the habit of saying to little folks, "Now

you must not be naughty ; you must be good children." The last is, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Here is no dissertation on the evil of idolatry. The advice is remarkably appropriate, when it is considered, that idol worship had associated with it a great deal of show, pomp, and parade ; of music, dancing, and feasting ; and, therefore, was very attractive to children.

To say that, as an apostle, it was enough to give a simple statement of the truth to adults, without employing any reasonings upon it, because his acknowledged inspiration gave sufficient authority to what he said, does not solve the difficulty. The other apostles were inspired as well as John ; and yet in the scraps of their sermons preserved in the Acts, and in their epistles, we find them arguing many points in the most masterly manner. The truths which John has taught in this epistle, are of the most sublime and interesting kind ; but the manner in which they are taught, proves either that his pupils were juveniles, or that his own mind was dwarfish.

4. It ought not to surprise us that much of this epistle is addressed to very young children, because we find his second epistle is written to a pious woman and her children. I suppose the two families mentioned in this epistle, would, like the little ones in the first epistle, have been transformed by expositors into metaphorical children, (there would certainly have been equal reason for it,) had they not been noticed in connexion with their mothers. The way in which he notices these families, shows the spiritual relation in which he stood to the young people, and the interest he felt in their welfare. Speaking of the children of the elect lady, he says, "whom I love in the truth." And again, "I rejoiced greatly, that I found of thy children walking in truth." As to the other family of children, mentioned at the close of this epistle, it is not to be supposed that they would have sent their salutation to their aunt and cousins by the apostle, had they not been upon the most intimate and friendly terms

with him. This is not to be explained away, by supposing that John was paying a pastoral visit to the parents, and happening to state his intention of writing to their relatives, the young people desired to be remembered to them. Had this been the case, the father and mother would surely have been joined with their children in affectionate salutation. But the father is not once named; and the mother sends no greeting, which is a sufficient proof that neither of them was present. The children seem to have been under his pastoral care, and to have enjoyed his friendship. (2 Epist. 13.)

It is clear then that the apostle had a sincere love to children, that he felt uncommon pleasure in witnessing their spiritual improvement, that they were a part of his flock, and that to them, in connexion with a pious parent, he addressed a pastoral letter. Compare all this with the charge he had received from his divine Master, to receive little ones in his name; and no one, I think, can doubt but the first epistle was written for the use of little children literally, as well as for young men and fathers.

I have taken the more pains to establish the literal meaning of the phrase little children, in this epistle, because it is a general epistle; that is, an epistle written for the use of all christian churches in general, and not addressed to any one church in particular. When we find an epistle addressed to the churches, generally, in which much more relates to little children than to any other class of christians, it demonstrates that there was a large proportion of little children in all the apostolic churches.

We will now come to particular churches, in which we shall find little children. The following passage deserves particular attention. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up

in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephes. vi. 1—4.)

The apostle evidently had an eye here to very young children, though elder ones are included in the general obligation. The reasons upon which the exhortation is founded, appear to be selected with special reference to the weak capacities of little ones. For this is right . . . that it may be well with thee . . . that thou mayest live long on the earth. What is said to the fathers, demonstrates that the apostle alluded particularly to very young children. Provoke them not to wrath; but bring them up in the Lord. He could not here refer to adult children; because they were already brought up, and had little to dread from the severity of their fathers' dispositions.

Some with whom I have conversed upon this passage, have supposed, that the advice to parents, respected their children at home; and that there is no proof of the little ones being present, when the church was convened to hear the letter read. But there is no occasion to go home to find the children, because they are as much addressed in the epistle as their fathers; and we may as well suppose that the parents were not present, as that the children were not; and that the children carried home the apostle's advice to their parents. The epistle is inscribed, "To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." When the epistle arrived, the saints and faithful brethren, that is, the church, would be convened to hear it read. As the reader proceeds, he comes to these words, "Children, obey your parents," etc. How ridiculous, if we are to suppose there were no children present to hear him! Husbands and wives, masters and servants, and parents, are addressed, as well as children; and we have as much right to suppose they were not members of the church, and were, therefore, all absent, as to exclude the children; and then, where will you find the church at Ephesus? But the children are spoken to by the apostle in a meeting of the church; they are acknowledged as saints

and faithful brethren ; they are in the Lord, and they are to be brought up in the Lord.

In the epistle to the church at Colosse, the apostle speaks to little ones. "Children obey your parents in all things : for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." (Col. iii. 20, 21.)

Parental authority diminishes, as children advance in life. Here the apostle requires obedience in all things ; which shows that he had an eye to very young children. He does not allow them a will of their own in anything, by which their conduct is to be determined ; but subjects them in all things to the will of their parents. Many explain the words to mean, all lawful things. He certainly has not given parents authority to command anything which is unlawful ; but is the judgment of the parent, or that of the child, to determine the question, as to the lawfulness of the command ? This must surely depend much upon the age of the child, as well as other circumstances. There is no guarding against the possibility of mistake ; but the judgment of a parent is more likely to be correct, than that of a little child. If a youngster, six or eight years of age, is absolved from all obligation to obedience, whenever he judges the command to be unlawful, parental authority is a mere chimera. Children very commonly think the injunctions of their parents are unreasonable. It is not denied, that when a child has arrived at years of discretion, he ought not to obey a parent in anything which he clearly perceives to be unlawful ; but before he has attained to that period, his judgment and will must be subject to the judgment and will of his parents.

The question then is, whether the children addressed by the apostle had arrived at years of discretion, or not : I affirm they had not ; because he does not content himself with merely saying—"Children obey your parents ;" and so leave room for a latitude of interpretation, as to the extent of the obligation, to be

determined by the age of the children, in connexion with other considerations; but he clearly defines the extent of the duty by adding, "in all things." He has left nothing, therefore, to the discretion of the children; and it necessarily follows, that the children he particularly refers to, had not yet arrived at years of discretion.

If this conclusion needed additional support, the passage would afford it. The motive which the apostle urges, is such as is usually pressed upon the consideration of very young children: "For this is well pleasing unto the Lord." We all know how common it is to say to a little one, "Be a good child, and do as father and mother bid you; and God Almighty will love you." The advice given to the fathers respecting these children makes it evident that they were of tender age: "Fathers provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged." This does not apply to grown up children, who are nearly emancipated from parental authority.

The great fundamental principle of the baptists is, that children ought not to be admitted into the church, till they have come to years of discretion, and are allowed to judge and act for themselves. This principle is completely destroyed by the proof that there were children under that age in the churches of Ephesus and Colosse, who were addressed by the apostle in his epistles, as saints, and faithful brethren in Christ.

But there is no proof, says an objector, that they were infants: the apostle would not lay his commands upon children before they were capable of knowing something about them. Very true; and on the other hand, his not addressing infants is no proof they were not members, because the objector admits that, had they been present, they would not have been proper subjects of apostolic exhortation. Enough is proved to show the lawfulness of infants' church membership. Here are children in the church, who are not allowed by the apostle to judge and act for themselves in anything; whose understandings and wills are subjected to their

parents: their membership, therefore, must have been the result of their parents' choice, and not of their own; and a parent must have as good a right to initiate an infant, as a child in the next stage of life. The principle is the matter of importance. The principle established by these examples of juvenile membership, completely overturns the principle upon which anti-pedobaptism rests, and proves the lawfulness of infants' membership.

Till the baptists admit persons into their churches without pressing upon them the obligations of baptism, I shall take it for granted that the little ones in these churches had all received the ordinance.

I sincerely wish our baptist brethren, and others who have no little children in their churches, to compare the apostolic churches with their own. Must there not be a radical defect in those religious communions, from which the little ones are excluded?

The view which has been taken of the subject in the preceding discussion, will furnish an answer to the question, What is the use of infant baptism? By bringing up a child in the church of Christ, it is taught the doctrine, and trained in the discipline, of the gospel; its mind is impressed with the obligations of religion; the labours of parents in the promotion of its spiritual interests, which experience proves in thousands of instances is ineffectual, when alone, is powerfully aided by the pastor, and other members of the church; and its early and close connexion with the excellent ones of the earth, must have a powerful influence in the formation of its character.

CHAPTER VI.

AN INQUIRY, WHETHER THERE BE ANYTHING IN THE NATURE AND SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY OPPOSED TO THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS, AND IN FAVOUR OF BELIEVERS' BAPTISM, AS PRACTISED BY OUR DIFFERING BRETHREN.

No one pretends to produce a passage out of the New Testament, which expressly prohibits the baptism of infants; or, what amounts to the same thing, their admission into the christian church. In reply to this, it will be said, that to warrant the baptism of infants, it is not enough to say, it is not prohibited; a precept, or an example must be produced to authorize it. This reply would be sufficient, if infants had never been admitted into the church; but since they had been initiated into the covenant, and were allowed the privilege of membership, for many hundred years, the case is altered. If it can be proved that, by the authority and command of God, little ones had a place in the church from the days of Abraham to the coming of Christ, it necessarily follows, that their right remains under the gospel, provided no clause expressing their exclusion can be found in it. If any particular class of individuals are once legally admitted to the privileges of any institution, their claim must continue valid, till their exclusion be legally notified.

The baptists have taken much pains to show, that circumcision did not initiate its subjects into the covenant of grace, but merely entitled them to temporal benefits; such as, a share in the land of Canaan, and many civil rights: for if it were granted, that a child, by circumcision, was admitted into the covenant of grace, its church membership could not be disputed, because the covenant is the foundation on which the church is built; a person, therefore, who is in the covenant, ought not to be kept out of the church.

Let us then examine, with some care, what were the chief benefits conferred by circumcision. We must look at the original institution: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession: and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." (Gen. xvii. 7—14.) There are several things in this passage which must be carefully noted:—

1. The everlasting covenant mentioned in verse 7, is the covenant into which they were admitted by circumcision; because it is said, verse 12, "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant."

2. Two different classes of persons are here mentioned as the proper subjects of the rite. (1.) The natural descendants of Abraham, called his seed. (2.) Every slave purchased by an Israelite, or born in his house, "which is not of thy seed."

3. Two different kinds of blessings are promised to the circumcised. (1.) Spiritual. "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." And again,

"I will be their God." These promises must include all spiritual blessings. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him." "Be not dismayed: I am thy God." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "Blessed is the man whose God is the Lord." (2.) Temporal. "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed, all the land of Canaan."

The temporal advantages connected with circumcision were restricted to the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, through the line of Isaac. We read that "Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day, as God had said unto him." (Gen. xvii. 23.) The circumcision of these persons entailed upon them no right to the land of Canaan; nor did the circumcision of slaves in after times procure them either civil liberty, or landed property; they must, therefore, have received some spiritual privileges, or they gained nothing by the rite.

That gentiles derived spiritual privileges from circumcision is evident from Isaiah lvi. 6, 7: "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." As the covenant is called the covenant of circumcision, no uncircumcised person could take hold of it; nor was it permitted to any one who had not received the sign of the covenant, to enter into the temple and engage in its sacred services. The persons mentioned in the text, therefore, were circumcised gentiles; and all the immunities which they enjoyed, as here enumerated, were of a purely religious nature.

The greatest temporal blessings will bear no comparison with those which are spiritual; in the New Testament, therefore, when the design and advantages of circumcision are mentioned, the earthly benefits, though not denied, are never expressed. "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith." (Rom. iv. 11.) Not a word about temporals.

But is it not remarkable, that the apostle has settled this question, as to what was conferred by circumcision,—though it is still agitated by some with as much zeal, as though he had not said a word about it. "What profit is there of circumcision?" Now let us see whether all these profits, or the chief of them, are of a temporal nature. The answer is, "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid." (Rom. iii. 1—3.) The temporal benefits may be included in the phrase, "Much every way." But when he goes on to state the chief advantage, earthly things are lost sight of; it is not in the land of Canaan, but in the oracles of God, that the circumcised are to find their principal profit; and these are of infinitely more value than all the land in the universe. These oracles were intrusted to them that they might become believers. "And if some did not believe?" what then? others did to their eternal profit; so that circumcision was not to be scouted as conferring no spiritual advantages: "Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid." I hope it will not be contended that "the faith of God" means, "the land of Canaan."

Circumcision then initiated its subjects into the covenant of grace; the initiated, were instructed in the oracles of God, which contain the doctrines of grace; and those who cordially believed these doctrines, experienced their saving efficacy. But though the Jews had temporal benefits connected with circumcision, yet the rite was not instituted on that account. "Cir-

cumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law : but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." (Rom. ii. 25.) Here again the profit of circumcision is not made to consist in the enjoyment of temporal blessings, but in keeping the law, or the oracles of God : and however great the temporal advantages of a Jew might be, he was considered as virtually uncircumcised, if he lived in the habitual violation of the law ; but this could not be true, if circumcision had been appointed on account of anything of an earthly nature.

The benefits which Abraham's slaves and servants derived from circumcision, were of a spiritual nature. So we read in the chapter following the account of their circumcision : " I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Here the household of the patriarch is distinguished from his children ; and, therefore, must take in the whole domestic establishment, which amounted to many hundred persons. In fact, we have here a church. Abraham was the priest : he had an altar, and he offered sacrifices. He was the prophet or teacher, and instructed all under his care " in the way of the Lord." Under his pious training, the Lord saw they would acquire those virtuous habits which would become permanent ; so that when deprived of their pastor, they would still " keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment ;" and they would find that " in keeping his commandments there is great reward," as well as great delight.

Circumcision then was evidently the rite of initiation into the covenant of grace ; it entitled those who received it, to all the spiritual privileges of that covenant ; and it laid them under an obligation to discharge its duties. This rite was performed upon infants ; and if any one still doubt whether these infants were members of the church, let him attend to the following :

Hezekiah appointed " Kore, the son of Imnah the Levite, over the free will offerings of God, to distribute

the oblations of the Lord, and the most holy things. And next him were Eden, and Miniamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, in the cities of the priests, in their set office, to give to their brethren by courses, as well to the great as to the small : Beside their genealogy of males from three years old and upward, even unto every one that entereth into the house of the Lord, his daily portion for their service and their charges, according to their courses ; both to the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their charges by their courses ; and to the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation : for in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness. Also of the sons of Aaron the priests, which were in the fields of the suburbs of their cities, in every several city, the men that were expressed by name, to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites." (2 Chron. xxxi. 14—19.)

On this remarkable passage, Mr. Taylor, in his *Facts and Evidences on the Subject of Baptism*, makes the following observations : —

"The genealogy of the males, was authenticated at three years of age ; children at three years old entered into the house of the Lord ; and the children of the priests, whose were the most holy things, and the oblations to the Lord ; had a right to eat of those most holy things at this early time of life ! The text is studiously precise. These officers were to distribute to the small as well as to the great ; according to the genealogy of all their little ones : and these little ones are distinguished from sons, and from daughters : and this principle extended through all the congregation. It is clear, then, that at this early time of life, children entered the holy temple, were participators in the rites there performed, and were borne on the sacred registers.

"Now this passage gives light on another, which

though often appealed to, has seldom been accurately investigated. Moses says, (Deut. xxix. 10—13,) ‘Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God;’ ‘Your little ones,’ that is, children of three years old, according to the passage in the Chronicles,—‘to enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day; that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.’ Children of three years old enter into covenant with God! Yes; this is their own personal act!

“Nor are these the only places where little ones are public characters; for Joshua, confirming, or rather, renewing, this covenant of the Lord, on mount Gerizim, ‘read all the words of the law, the blessings, and the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law, to the little ones;’—to children of three years old! (Josh. viii. 34, 35.) It is clear from the passages adduced, that children of three years old were members of the Hebrew community, civil and religious, in the most sacred rites, in the most solemn transactions, equally as their fathers were. They were, no doubt, subject to the same preparatory purifications, and were treated on the same ritual principles as their fathers.”*

Samuel was presented to the Lord, in the tabernacle, as soon as his mother had weaned him, which was probably when he was three years old. “And the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest.” “Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.” (1 Sam. ii. 11, 18.) Here is a child about three years of age, clothed in a sacred vestment, and performing the most solemn acts of public worship before the Lord in the tabernacle!

Having shown that, by the authority of God, infants were received into the covenant, and the church;

* Three Additional Letters to a late Deacon of a Baptist Church, pp. 22, 23.

and that, at three years of age, they were publicly recognized as members of the church, and personally performed, public acts of membership ; it follows, that the same divine authority, which granted the rite, must be shown to have cancelled it, before they can justly be deprived of it ; and as no one pretends that God has prohibited the membership of infants under the gospel, the original grant must remain in full force.

As nothing express can be produced against the admission of infants under the gospel, we must proceed to consider the reasons on which their exclusion is inferred.

Some have thought that, as the law was repealed by the gospel, the church membership of infants was included in that repeal.

And would not the same premises equally support the conclusion, that the church membership of adults was repealed also ? and then under the gospel, God would have no church at all. But the fact is, the membership of infants was founded, not upon the law, but upon the promise made to Abraham, which promise, according to the apostle, was four hundred and thirty years before the law was given ; the abolition of the law therefore, could not affect the rights which infants enjoyed, prior to it, and independent of it.

It is urged that circumcision, which was the rite of initiation into the church under the old dispensation, was abolished ; and this annulled all the rights of infants. I cannot see the consequence. If one rite be repealed, another is instituted in its stead. I have proved that circumcision was the rite of initiation into the church, by arguments which I am under no apprehension will be easily refuted ; and the baptists do not deny that baptism now is the rite of initiation into the church. Baptism, then, is substituted in the place of circumcision, as to this particular point ; and I think it would be easy to show that the one rite answers to the other in several other respects ; but my argument does not require it. Baptism is stated by the apostle

to be the christian circumcision. "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Col. ii. 11, 12.) It does not seem necessary, in order to put a new door of entrance into a sheep fold, that all the lambs of the flock, any more than the sheep, should be driven out into the wilderness. We cannot justly infer a change in the subjects of the church, from a change in the mode of admission into it, unless the different modes were incapable of application to the same subjects; but it is just as easy to baptize a child, as to circumcise it.

But we are not left to our own reasonings as to whether a change in the rite of admission into a covenant, implies a change of the covenant itself; for the apostle has not only stated, but he has argued the point, that the Abrahamic is the same as the christian covenant; and that the institution and abolition of the law made no change in that covenant at all. "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men. Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." (Gal. iii. 15—17.) That the covenant here spoken of,—which existed four hundred and thirty years prior to the law, which the law could not disannul, which was originally confirmed in Christ, and through which alone the justification of faith can be obtained;—that this was the covenant into which Abraham and his descendants were admitted by circumcision, is quite evident; because the very terms of it furnish the arguments of the apostle. (Gen. xvii. 7.) It necessarily results from the above, that the Abrahamic covenant

still remains in full force; and since infants were admitted into the church of God on the ground of it, they must be still entitled to the same privilege.

Here then we make our stand. Infants were in the church before the law, and under the law; and the covenant is still in force, which required their admission. This is our warrant for admitting little ones into the family of God. Suppose we could find no new authority in the New Testament, the argument would not be invalidated: that which never was repealed, need not be enacted again. Those then who are opposed to the membership of children, should produce the statute of repeal, by which their privileges are taken away; and till this be done, their rights may be safely rested upon the original grant.

The supposed uncertainty, whether an infant will become truly pious, is generally assigned as one reason, and a principal reason, why it ought not to be admitted to baptism or into the visible church of Christ. The christian church, it is said, is a spiritual community; its members ought to exhibit evidences of being the subjects of gracious influence; and, as religion is not hereditary, the piety of the parent is not a sufficient warrant for the baptism and membership of a child.

That the members of the church should be spiritual and virtuous is granted: but it has been shown that it is not necessary to carry religion into the church; it is sufficient if it be acquired there. The subject now to be discussed is, whether the future conversion and salvation of an infant, be a matter of so much doubt, as to justify a denial of the privileges in question.

Solomon hath said, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. xxii. 6.) The word *chanac*, rendered "train," signifies "to initiate." There is nothing mysterious in this passage; it states as clearly and as positively as can be desired, the blessed result of a right education. The first impressions are deepest. Habits acquired by a course of religious and moral training, in childhood and youth, generally form the

character for life. Let a child then be initiated into the church of God, and into the paths of piety and virtue ; the effect promised will follow, in consequence of the divine blessing accompanying the means employed.

It will, however, be considered by many as a powerful objection, that there are several examples in scripture, of good men having had bad children. The fact is not disputed ; but what is the cause ? Was the failure owing to the parent, in not giving the child a proper education ? then the position of the wise man is not touched. Or did the child turn out ill, after parental duty had been faithfully discharged, in consequence of a failure in the promise ? No christian surely will insinuate the latter. The objection, therefore, is of no weight. Eli, no doubt, was a good man, and his sons were desperately wicked ; but the father is very much blamed for their faults, because he did not lay them under restraint. The old man is charged with honouring his sons above God ; and the message announcing the ruin of his family was delivered to himself, "because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." It is true he gave them good advice, and expostulated with them in very moving terms ; but this was not enough.

Jacob purified his family from idolatry, and engaged them in the service of the true God. "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments ; and let us arise and go up to Bethel ; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand." (Gen. xxxv. 2—4.)

Joshua could answer for his family, as well as for himself. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Jos. xxiv. 15.) The Almighty bears testimony to the permanency of those virtuous habits acquired by the household of Abraham, while under his

care. "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." (Gen. xviii. 19.)

The covenant promise made to Abraham was, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." On the ground of this promise, Jewish parents were made responsible for their children; they were required to initiate their little ones into the covenant, and to train them up in God's service; and in doing this, God did what the parents could not do — he gave them grace.

Let us now inquire whether the christian covenant contains any special promises to the children of pious parents.

"In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xxviii. 14.) This promise is generally, and, I believe, justly, applied to christian families, which shall be blessed in Christ.

It has been noticed, in chapter iii., that on the opening of the gospel dispensation, on the day of pentecost, the apostle Peter included children with their parents, in the promise of the Spirit. (Acts ii. 38, 39.)

The angel said to Cornelius, respecting the apostle Peter, "He shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (Acts xi. 14.) The sermon which this apostle preached in the house of Cornelius, was the opening of the gospel dispensation among the gentiles. Here the whole family is included in the promise made to the head of it. Yes, say some, if all the family believe the words; not otherwise. I answer, the means are certainly included in the end; and, in this instance, the end is promised as the reward of the father's piety; not, however, a reward of debt, but of grace. The promise is, "Thou and all thy house shall be saved." What induced God to make this promise? The angel explained this to Cornelius. "He said unto him, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before me." The prayers and alms of the family are not included in this memo-

rial. While Peter was preaching, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word;" so that the whole of his family, and several of his relatives, were saved, in answer to the prayers of this pious man.

The jailer inquired of Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The man was not inquiring respecting the salvation of his family, but what he himself must do. They directed him to believe; and the promise annexed to his faith is, "Thou shalt be saved, and thy house." To suppose, as some do, that the meaning of the promise respecting the family is,—“Thy house shall be saved, if they believe; but whether they will believe, or not, is perfectly uncertain,”—is not to explain, but to pervert the plainest words of scripture. If this interpretation be true, they might as well have replied to this question, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and all mankind;" for no one will deny that all men may be saved, if they will but believe. Having shown that the blessings of the gospel covenant belong to the children of pious parents, it follows, that when a parent believes, the promises belong to his family.

But though a christian parent has a claim on God for the salvation of his family, he has no right to expect the accomplishment of the promise, but in the use of those means which God has appointed for that end. The command to parents respecting their children is, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephes. vi. 4.) Dr. Macknight renders it, "The correction and instruction of the Lord." By "the Lord," is undoubtedly meant, our Saviour.

The first duty of a pious parent is to dedicate his offspring to the Lord by baptism. It has been fully proved, that no person in the apostles' times enjoyed a course of christian instruction, before he received the rite. And it would appear more strange still, to subject children to the correction of the Lord, that is,

the discipline of his church, if they were not members of the church, or if they were members of the church and not baptized.

Children must be instructed in the Lord. The Jews were required to teach their little ones the word of God, when they sat in the house, and when they walked by the way ; at lying down, and at rising up. (Deut. xi. 19.) Timothy's mother and grandmother had taught him the holy scriptures in his childhood, and made him wise unto salvation. By reading the scriptures in the family, by familiarly catechising the children, and by taking them regularly to the house of God, parents must bring up their children in the instruction of the Lord.

Children must be subjected to the correction, or discipline of the Lord. Their vicious propensities, as soon as they appear, must be restrained. While they are taught to obey their parents in all things, that obedience must be enforced. And if parents only begin in time, they will have no occasion to rule with a rod of iron. They may secure their children's affection and obedience best, by following the apostle's advice : "Fathers provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." (Col. iii. 20, 21.)

"But we cannot give our children grace." True : You are not required to do this. If they are properly brought up, God will not withhold his blessing. He has promised to save your family ; but he has appointed means in order to that end ; you are to employ those means, and he will render them effectual.

It will be proper here, to guard against a most dangerous error. Many parents, who have neglected to bring their children up in the correction and instruction of the Lord, cherish an impression, that at some future period they will all become pious, though at present they are living without God in the world. The claim upon Heaven is in the use of means ; not in the neglect of them. Many of these parents, however, are so imprudent, as to express this persuasion in the presence of their ungodly children, by which their

hearts are the more hardened ; as they very naturally conclude, that if the piety of their parents has secured their salvation, they need not concern themselves at all about it.

The promise respecting the piety of children is connected with the duty of parents, to train them up in the ways of the Lord ; and will receive its accomplishment in the course of this holy training. A parent who, in the bringing up of his children, has neglected to instil into their minds religious knowledge and principles, and to subject them to moral discipline, can have no special claim upon the Almighty to turn their minds to himself in after-life. It is while they are under a parent's roof, and the means of salvation are in operation, that the conversion of children is to be expected ; but if this day of salvation be passed away, unimproved ; if the young people have left their father's house, and are launched into the world in their sins ; it is then too late to plead the promise. They may, like the children of wicked parents, become religious after they are settled in the world ; but there are no special grounds for confidence ; and a parent who has neglected the religious education of his offspring, and yet cherishes a full persuasion of their future piety, is under an awful delusion ; and when he has expressed to them his conviction of their salvation, he has done what will very probably prevent it.

It is of vast importance to fill the juvenile mind as it opens, with religious and moral sentiments, and to train it up from infancy in habits of virtue. If the great enemy be permitted to have the first turn, he may get so strongly intrenched, as to baffle every effort to dispossess him. It is much easier to keep the devil out, than, after he has gained possession, to cast him out.

The religious instruction and discipline of children was a matter of so much consequence in the opinion of the apostle, that he would not permit a father who neglected these duties, to hold any office in the church.

“If a man desire the office of a bishop, he must be one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity ; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God ?” “Let the deacons rule their children and their own houses well.” “I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee : If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.” (1 Tim. iii. 1 — 12 ; Titus i. 5, 6.) Upon these texts observe : —

1. The apostle is not speaking here of persons in office, but of private christians fit for office ; — the virtues enumerated ought to be practised by all private christians. They are required to be sober, chaste, etc. These duties are binding on all christians ; but they are noticed as indispensable qualifications for office, on account of their great importance.

2. All christian parents, then, must rule their houses well ; their children must not be riotous or unruly ; but must be made dutiful, grave, and faithful. The apostle does not require impossibilities. It necessarily follows, that when children, instead of being dutiful, grave, and faithful, are riotous and unruly, the parents are to blame : they have not brought them up in the correction and instruction of the Lord.

3. What in Titus i. 6, is read “faithful children,” is by Macknight, and even Booth, rendered, “believing children.” Now if believer’s baptism be a duty, as our baptist friends contend ; and if parents are required to have believing children ; then parents are required to have their children baptized.

Mr. Taylor, in his *Facts and Evidences*, has argued well from this text, on the inconsistency of baptist ministers, who have unbaptized children. He has made it appear very plain, that the apostle would have forbid them the ministry.

I do not contend for it, nor does my argument require it, that if children be properly brought up, they will

universally turn out well ; because the exceptions will not be so numerous as to affect the general principle. The dispensations of providence are analogous to those of grace ; and they will illustrate each other. A farmer is as dependent on providence for the increase of the earth, as a parent is on grace for the piety of his children. The husbandman has no command over the elements or seasons ; and unless the sun and rain alternately visit his fields, he may plough, and manure, and sow, to no purpose : he can have no crop at the time of harvest. But God has promised summer and winter, seed-time and harvest ; hence he labours in hope, and sows in hope, and, ordinarily, he is not disappointed. Sometimes, however, a field fails ; but these exceptions to the order of nature are so rare, that they do not paralyse the operations of agriculture. So it is in religion. God has promised to bless the pious labours of christian parents, just the same as he has promised to reward the toil of the husbandman. A wayward child may now and then render abortive all the pains taken with him ; but these instances, when parents do their duty, occur, I believe, but seldom ; and should no more discourage the religious instruction and discipline of children, than the failures in agriculture discourage the industry of the cultivator. What would be thought of the farmer who should say, " I cannot command the sun or rain ; and without these I shall have no crop ; I will, therefore, pray to the Lord, and leave my lands in his hands, without cultivation ? " Would he not be thought fit for a lunatic asylum ? And what are we to think of those parents, who are perpetually saying, " We cannot give our children grace ; we can only pray for them, and leave them to the Lord ? " You might, I think, do a trifle more : you might pray with them, teach them to pray, and take them regularly to the house of prayer ; you might, according to the apostle, bring them up in the doctrine and discipline of the Lord, rule them well, keep them in subjection, and make them faithful. The blessing of God accompanies

parental exertion; and when this is neglected, to dream of leaving them in the hands of the Lord, is delusion: they are left in the hands of the devil.

I should not have spent so much time over this objection, had not its refutation been a matter of such vital importance to christian parents. Let our brethren, then, plead for the purity and spirituality of the church as strenuously as they can; we have proved that the church will not be defiled by these juvenile members, if parents and ministers do their duty. The evil which would result from the membership of the few who will not profit by the advantages they enjoy, can easily be prevented or remedied by their expulsion. The cause of religion is not hurt by the faults of children; the scandal brought upon the gospel is occasioned by the vices of its adult professors. The exercise of pure discipline will not fail to keep the church pure.

We are told, that infants ought not to be baptized, because they are incapable of judging and choosing for themselves. A child of a month old knows nothing about either baptism or christianity; its understanding is not informed, and its will does not approve; its baptism, therefore, is pronounced a nullity.

We have heard so much on the impropriety of young people being subjected to religion before they understand it, and choose it for themselves, that the matter must be sifted a little. In order to get into it, we must for a moment or two, lose sight of this country, which is christian in profession, and transport ourselves to a heathen country,—say, in the times of the apostles. A few heathen parents were converted at Ephesus. What became the duty of these heads of families, in consequence of this change, in relation to their children? Before we can discuss this point, we must settle another. At what age are children capable of judging and choosing for themselves? Baptists seldom administer the ordinance to young people before the age of twelve, and generally not till several years beyond. Let us say, however,

that at twelve, a young heathen is capable of comprehending religion, and of making up his mind about it.

What is to be done with the children under twelve years of age? Are they to be instructed in the christian religion? Are they to be corrected in the Lord? O yes, to be sure! But suppose they should not choose to become christians? suppose they should not choose to receive the wholesome discipline of a christian family? Suppose they should choose to go to the temple, with other children, and worship Diana? No one will say that children, so young, have a right to follow the bent of their own minds in these matters, in opposition to the wishes of their parents, unless he be prepared to go the length of affirming, that christianity destroys one of the first laws of nature,—parental authority. Few, if any, will go so far. Till about twelve, then, a little one is not to be a member of either the church of Christ, or the synagogue of satan. Hapless child! thou art fit for neither God nor the devil!

But the minor is to be subjected to christian instruction and correction. Yes; so says the apostle. Now I wish to know upon what principles, or by what authority, a baptist can make it out, that a child, whether it consent or not, must be subjected by its parents to a course of christian instruction and correction, but that it must not be subjected by them to baptism. Why is the baptism of the Lord to be a subject of choice, more than his correction and instruction? To bring forward a few examples of adult baptism, and to infer from them that, because the subjects in these cases were not under the influence of human authority, no father has a right, without his child's free consent, to bring it under the ordinance, is proving too much; for these examples would serve just as well to show that children ought not to be corrected and instructed in the Lord; because there is not one instance in the examples adduced, of the person being compelled to receive christian correction

and instruction, any more than baptism. This shows the absurdity of arguing from the case of men to that of children.

Since little ones, whether they approve of it or not, are to be brought up in the Lord, the next question is, whether they are to be devoted to the Lord by baptism, at the commencement of their religious education, or whether the ordinance should be deferred for near half a score years, and, in case of the young person's non-approval, for ever.

It has been shown, that our Lord places baptism before a course of christian instruction; and that the apostles uniformly acted upon that plan. If a single example to the contrary, taken from the New Testament, can be produced, we will give up the cause; and if no such example can be produced, we have completely gained it.

Since children are to be brought up "in the Lord," let us inquire how they are brought into this relation. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? . . . For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." (Rom. vi. 3; Gal. iii. 27.)

Both these texts assert they were "baptized into Christ." But this could not be, if they were in Christ before baptism. The apostle goes on to explain what he means by the phrase, "Baptized into his death." "We are," says he, "buried with him by baptism into death. . . . Planted together in the likeness of his death. . . . Our old man is crucified with him. . . . He that is dead is freed from sin. . . . Christ died unto sin once, and liveth unto God. . . . Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Baptism into the death of Christ, denotes a likeness between our baptism and Christ's death, as to their effects. In dying, Christ died unto sin; in our baptism into death, our old man is crucified with him, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Christ rose from the dead, and liveth unto God; we rise from the death of sin, which

follows baptism, and are alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. If our dying to sin and living to God are effects of baptism, they cannot precede it.

Whether the putting on Christ, in the latter of the above texts, denotes the spirit and power of christianity, or only the profession of it, matters nothing in this controversy ; the point of importance is, that this putting on of Christ does not precede, but follow baptism. They are first baptized into Christ, and then they put on Christ. If it signify a reception of the spirit of his religion ; then they had it not prior to their baptism : if it signify putting on a profession ; then, in the apostles' days, people did not so much as assume the profession of christianity, before they had received the ordinance.

If it be the duty of parents, therefore, to bring up their children in the Lord ; and if this relation be brought about by baptism ; it is the duty of parents to have their children baptized.

It will probably be objected, that I ascribe too much to the ordinance. I do not suppose that the effects attributed to it in scripture, always follow. By baptism, according to the apostolic order, a person was admitted into the church of Christ ; he was in consequence entitled to the immunities, and obliged to discharge the duties of the christian religion. The obligation is connected with the title ; and the neglect of duty involves in it a forfeiture of the privilege. To attribute, as some do, all the benefits connected with the rite, to the mere washing of water, without regarding the obligations which it imposes upon its subjects, is a delusion equally dangerous and foolish. The apostle Peter affirms, that we are saved by baptism ; but he informs us at the same time, that the end of the ordinance can only be secured by the maintenance of a good conscience toward God.

If at twelve years of age, when the youth is supposed to be able to make up his mind on the subject of religion, he should not choose to be a christian ;

what is to be done then? Shall he be permitted to follow the heathenish bent of his mind; to desert the public worship of Christ, and openly profess and practise idolatry? Must no other means of restraint be employed than entreaty and persuasion, which he may attend to or reject at pleasure?

When a person has to choose one out of two things, he ought to understand them both; or he may make a wrong choice. Now if a christian parent has restrained his child from attending the pagan worship, and from reading pagan books, till the age of twelve, and then puts it to him, whether he will be a christian or a pagan, the youngster may justly reply, "I understand only one side of the question. Before I decide, I should like to know more about the religion of my neighbours. Allow me, father, to go to their temple and study their books on religion, for a few years; and then I shall be able, I hope, to form a rational judgment as to which of the two systems I ought to embrace. And as you say the christian religion allows young people the liberty of choice, I trust you will grant so reasonable a request." It is surely extremely absurd to talk of people choosing, who are denied all means of information on one side of the question. If it be the duty of a parent to put it to the choice of his children whether they will be idolaters or christians, it must be his duty to instruct them well in both systems, that they may be qualified to come to a rational decision.

In a christian country, like this, the consequences of leaving religion to the choice of children are not so appalling; because if they should not prefer the sect of their fathers, they will go amongst some other denomination of christians, where they may possibly enjoy equal if not superior religious advantages. But to talk of parents suffering their children to choose, when the choice lies between Christ and Belial, is shocking. The apostle would not allow a father thus to trifle with the souls of his offspring. "He must have his children in subjection.... He must have be-

lieving children....Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy family."

The consequences of keeping a child out of the church are fearful. If he be taught that Jesus Christ and the holy apostles, in framing the constitution of the christian church, excluded all little children; can he feel the obligation of the laws of that church, binding upon his conscience? In the nature of things, no person can feel it a duty to observe the statutes of an institution from which he is excluded. The inhabitants of this country are not obliged to keep the laws of France. The kingdom of Christ is his church; and, therefore, none can be obliged to keep the laws of his kingdom, but the members of his church. The king of France, it will perhaps be said, may have some subjects in this country, where they are aliens, who yet owe him allegiance; so all the world is under the government of Christ, and he is intitled to the obedience of those who are out of his visible kingdom. I answer: suppose a Frenchman has a son who was born, and is left by his parents, in this country; suppose a law of France prohibited the parents from taking this child home with them, and the child from returning to the country of his fathers, till he should be grown a man; I wish to know what allegiance this child can owe, during his minority, to the French king? There must be at least two parties to a contract; and the obligation on one side cannot remain, if it be broken on the other. A king can have no more claim to the allegiance of a person to whom, without any fault on the part of that person, he refuses the protection of government, than a subject has to the protection of government, after he has turned a rebel.

The reign of Christ is the reign of grace. All the privileges of the new covenant are connected with obedience, when it springs from christian principles. Jesus Christ does not require us to serve him for nothing. It is true our best services have no merit, and the reward is all of grace; but still the reward is

promised to the faithful servant, and to him only. Now if the privileges of Christ's spiritual kingdom, that is, of the church, are withheld from children, it clearly follows, that children can be under no obligation to serve him.

The reader is probably impatient to remark, that a baptist minister would not refuse the ordinance to a child, who, by the holiness of its life, gave satisfactory proof of a work of grace on the heart. This has often been said, but it is difficult to state the quantum of holiness which would be deemed satisfactory. Without entering into this inquiry, look into a baptist church, and see how many children you can find in it. Can you find two who were baptized under the age of twelve? can you find half a dozen who were baptized under the age of twenty? I believe you may examine many baptist churches, and not find one within either of the above limits. Now how is this? If a baptist parent have, what the apostle requires, "faithful (or believing) children, not accused of riot, or unruly;" their children must, on their own confession, be fit for the ordinance; for a child cannot well give better evidences of grace, than by believing, and conducting itself in an orderly and submissive manner: why then are not the little folks baptized?

But the general complaint is, that the children are unruly,—that they seldom manifest much concern about their souls till they arrive at years of maturity. Hence, when an instance occurs of a child receiving the ordinance at twelve, or something under, it is much talked of as an extraordinary case. It is clear then that the same religious and moral means are not now used with children, as were employed in the age of the apostles; or the result would be the same. Not only our baptist friends, but parents generally, I fear, do not expect their little ones to trouble their heads much concerning religion; the proper means, therefore, are not employed to give their minds a religious bias. But when, in addition to this, a child hears its parent contend for adult baptism exclusively,

because Christ has shut the door of his church against all, except adult believers; is it not probable he will come to the conclusion, that he can have nothing to do with religion, prior to manhood; and that it would be almost, if not altogether sinful, to aspire to a place in the church before that period. If Jesus Christ will hire no labourers into his vineyard but adults, children can be under no obligation to serve him. Should they be at any loss as to the meaning of the word adult, any dictionary will inform them it denotes "a person arrived at maturity;" and the practice of the baptist churches will confirm them in this explanation; as the ordinance is scarcely ever given at an earlier period. Teach them that Christ will not allow them to have fellowship with his servants, and you will not easily persuade them that he requires them to do his work.

When they are grown up, they are desired to devote themselves to the Lord, and, by the ordinance, to enter into the fellowship of saints; the propriety of this advice they do not, perhaps, dispute; but they have been long serving another master, have been long united in another fellowship, and feel neither the disposition nor the power to dissolve these old connexions!

To keep children out of the church, is to lessen materially the influence of ministerial service upon them. They may be trained to a regular attendance on public worship; but the usefulness of a faithful pastor is not confined to preaching: his more private intercourse with his flock, is generally rendered a peculiar blessing. But these lambs are not the subjects of his special care; they form no part of his flock; and do not come under his notice, except when he pays an occasional visit to the parents; and even then, what he says has the less weight, from the consideration which is almost sure to occur to juvenile minds, that he has no authority over them; and that, consequently, they are not obliged to follow his counsel.

To keep children out of the church, is to deprive them of the advantages which might be derived from the society of the best people in the world. There is a tendency in man to imbibe the spirit, and to conform to the customs, habits, and manners of his associates. He has a character to support, and he fixes his standard at the average amount of the character of his friends : below this he will not willingly fall ; he would dread the reproach of dishonouring his connexion, and of debasing himself. How important, then, must christian fellowship be to children, whose susceptible minds are so strongly impressed with every thing that acts upon them. The society of the good would, through the promised influence of the Holy Spirit, shed a hallowing influence upon their hearts, and fix them in the paths of piety and virtue for life. Deny them this privilege, and what are they to do ? Must they, during that period of life when friendships are the most easily and quickly formed, and the most ardently cultivated, be cut off from the fellowship of saints ? this is to throw them into the way of the ungodly, where destruction and misery await them. You cannot confine a child to a hermitage ; and if you keep it out of the church, you abandon it to the world.

It is no small loss to a child, to be deprived of those means of grace in a christian church, which are restricted to the use of members. An adult has more resources in his own mind than a child ; and hence he can better bear the privation of outward means ; and yet an adult would think it very hazardous to neglect all the ordinances, which belong to the church exclusively. How then is a child to do without them ?

When the above train of observations are taken into the account, is it a matter of wonder that so few children are truly pious ? But to argue, because few get religion out of the church, therefore none of them ought to be taken into it, is absurd in the extreme. When a few specimens are found of a valuable plant coming to maturity, without cultivation, it is inferred

that, by proper culture, the soil will produce it in the greatest abundance. Is not the well-dressed garden of the church, much more likely, than the wilderness of this world, to produce an abundance of the fruits of righteousness? But God has not left a matter of such vital importance to be settled by the reasonings and conjectures of men. He has promised pious parents, if they use the means he has supplied, that their children shall be saved. To keep children out of his church, because, when arrived at maturity, they might not choose his service, and might pollute his sanctuary, is to dispute against God; and he who doth so, let him answer it.

I can feel no doubt but children generally would become pious, were they brought up in the church, and properly attended to; because the word of God is so full and decisive upon the subject; yet as any corroborative evidence is important, I shall support my views by the two following facts:—

The first is, the great success which has attended the institution of Sunday schools. Multitudes who are now ornaments to the christian name, received their first religious impressions in these humble seminaries. Reading the Bible, catechetical instruction, singing hymns, prayer, and a regular attendance on public worship, are the chief means by which so much good has been effected. And yet the advantages enjoyed in these schools are nothing near equal to those of church communion.

1. Religious improvement is not the sole, and in some instances, not the principal object of these institutions; whereas, spiritual good is the chief end of church membership.

2. The parents of many who attend Sunday schools are wicked, and by their example and discourse, obliterate the good impressions their children receive at school; and these children lessen the good effects of education on the minds of some others. On the other hand, a pious parent would co-operate with the church in her labours for the salvation of his chil-

dren ; and would choose them associates who would strengthen rather than injure their moral habits.

3. The pastors, leaders, and elders who would have juvenile church members under their care, are much better qualified to give religious instruction, and would therefore give it with more effect, than most of the teachers in Sunday schools.

4. It is only one day in the week that children are attended to in these schools ; and because it is Sunday, they cannot ordinarily attend public worship more than once. But were the children of pious parents members of the church, the whole sabbath would be at liberty for spiritual exercises ; and through the whole of the week, religious and moral means would be in free operation.

When we reflect on the comparatively few advantages which the children in Sunday schools enjoy, and the numerous disadvantages to which they are subject, we cannot behold many of them becoming truly pious, without feeling a strong conviction, that the children of pious parents would generally acquire a saving knowledge of the truth, were they brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The other fact is, that the friends, who bring up their children in their own society, and pay great attention to their religious education, generally succeed in making their little ones like themselves. And yet their religious means do not seem to possess anything at all attractive to children. Their public services cannot be thought very effective, when we seldom hear of a sinner being converted by attending them. The few who join their society, besides their own families, are generally persons who received their first spiritual good among christians of other denominations. How happens it, that with religious means, in some respects, so very defective, the children of the friends, with only a few solitary exceptions, tread in the steps of their parents : while the children of other sects almost as generally go over to the world ? The reason is obvious. They are trained up from infancy with

the greatest care, in the society ; their clothes are of the quaker colour and shape ; they are taught, as soon as they can lisp, to use the quaker dialect ; they are not permitted to associate with wicked children—their parties for play and pleasure are formed from among themselves ; they are sent at a proper age to quaker schools ; they are taken regularly to the quaker meetings, and are seldom permitted to attend any other ; they are subjected to quaker discipline ; and they are carefully instructed in the quaker tenets. Thus all their ideas, associations, habits, and connexions, are related to quakerism ; no wonder, therefore, that they continue stanch friends. Before a young friend can go over to the world, what an Herculean task has he to perform ! He must obliterate from his mind nearly every idea and impression, dissolve the closest ties of friendship, abandon his former pursuits, stupify a tender conscience, commit a moral suicide, and rise from the death of virtue to commence a life of sin ! This is everything but impossible, and in point of fact is a very rare occurrence. So true is the saying of the wise man, “Train up a child in the way he should go ; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

It will be said, in reply to all this, “You may make children quakers or methodists, churchmen or dissenters, but you cannot make them christians. The present race of quakers have been mostly trained up in the society ; and that, no doubt, is the reason why they are so formal, and possess so little of the power of religion.” A little truth is here mixed with much error ; we must try and form a separation.

1. As to the power of religion. How does the objector know that the friends have but little of it ? Their morals, as a body, will, I am confident, bear a comparison with those of any other denomination of christians. It is true there are individuals among them, whose lives do them no credit ; but what other sect is free from such ? or has so small a proportion of them ? Speaking generally, they are as sober, industrious, faithful, honest, and benevolent, as those

who talk loudest about the power of religion. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth much good fruit. The friends profess to have the power of religion; and when their lives correspond with their profession, it is bigotry, and nothing else, which rejects their testimony. They are not forward to converse upon religious topics, especially with strangers; and they do not, as much as I think they ought to do, cultivate religious friendships with other christians; their manners too, appear formal and forbidding; on these accounts they are but little known, and many mistaken opinions are entertained as to their religious experience.

2. But the friends cannot make their children christians! They happen to know this as well as we do; but they have more faith in God than we have. They believe the promise of the Spirit belongs to their children as well as to themselves; they view Christ as the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world; and they feel warranted in looking to heaven in confidence, for the dew of the divine blessing upon the tender plants which providence hath committed to their culture; and they are seldom disappointed.

But suppose they were really as destitute of the power of religion, as some ignorant people imagine, still their example is important. Had their children not been made quakers, they would have run wild in the world, and have lived like other worldly people; and then, how much, in point of good morals, would have been lost to society? Their example shows that, by bringing up children in religious society they may be induced, with a very few exceptions, to receive the doctrines, submit to the discipline, and practise the morality of that society, when they have attained to years of maturity. And if those who possess superior religious advantages, would bring these to bear upon the minds of their little ones, in addition to an education similar in its great outlines to that employed by the friends, there can be no room to doubt but the blessing of

God, since he has promised it, would accompany their pious efforts, and make their families truly christian.

“But why,” it will be demanded, “do you contend for infant baptism, if children may be made pious without it? Do the friends practise baptism?” I am now pleading for the religious training and church membership of children, and have given an example, to show that the effect corresponds with the divine promises. I look upon baptism as the appointed initiatory rite; but I do not think it of essential importance. Though the friends withhold it from their children, God will no more withhold his grace from them, for the fault of their parents, than he would withhold the Holy Spirit from Cornelius and his family, on account of the prejudices of the apostle Peter. As a divine institution, however, it ought to be complied with; but if children must not have both, I think it of much more consequence to give them membership without baptism, than baptism without membership.

Let us pause here for a moment, and review these great arguments against infant baptism. It must strike the reader as a singular circumstance, that not one of them is grounded upon scripture. Little ones were members of the church prior to the gospel; and no express law of christianity is quoted for their exclusion.

When we are told that the church is too pure for them; we ask, where is this written? No text again. The contrary is proved by the words of our Lord—“Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

When the doubtfulness of their future piety is made the pretext for shutting the door of the church against them, we require scripture authority for these doubts; but none whatever is offered. The fact is appealed to, that children brought up out of the church, that is, in the world, seldom become pious; but this is an odd sort of proof, that the result would be the same, were they brought up in the church: it seems to be taken

for granted, that the world is as good a school of virtue as the house of God. The employment of the prescribed means, we have shown at large, does not leave the salvation of children in uncertainty.

Though so much is said on the impropriety of administering baptism to children before they themselves desire it, not one word of holy writ is quoted in support of the argument. Instead of allowing them to pick and choose in religion, the apostle required them to be subject to their parents, and their parents to train them up in the ways of the Lord. When they arrive at the age which emancipates them from parental authority in other matters, they are, of course, at liberty, like other adults, to act for themselves in religion: but where do we read that baptism is to be protracted till this period?

Thus we have seen that these arguments against infant baptism are not only not built upon scripture, but are demolished by it.

Having replied to the objections against infant baptism, it may not be improper to turn the tables upon our opponents, and to show them that their believers' baptism is not the believers' baptism of the New Testament. Our Lord and his apostles placed baptism at the commencement of a christian life; while our opposing brethren do not administer it till the candidate has made considerable progress in christianity. I will enumerate several particulars:—

1. The apostles never delayed baptism after a person believed in the divine mission of our Lord. If our brethren followed their example, they would baptize children of three or four years of age, because at that period they believe in Christ; and then the controversy might be ended; for it would not be worth while to contend for an earlier administration of the ordinance.

2. John the Baptist and the apostles baptized "unto repentance." That cannot be done by those who require repentance unto life as a necessary preliminary.

3. Paul and the three thousand on the day of pentecost, were baptized "for the remission of sins." Our

brethren contend for justifying faith as a qualification; and they grant that justifying faith includes forgiveness; they cannot, therefore, baptize for the remission of sins.

4. The apostles exhorted people to be baptized, that they might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Our brethren look for proofs of the reception of the Holy Spirit, before they give the ordinance.

5. Our Lord and his apostles administered the rite, before they taught the peculiarities of the christian covenant. Our brethren require a knowledge of these peculiarities as a qualification for it.

6. The primitive christians "were baptized into Christ." Our brethren insist upon our being in Christ preparatory to the ordinance.

7. The apostle places baptism before the putting on of Christ. (Gal. iii. 27.) Our brethren the contrary.

8. Baptism stands before sanctification, (1 Cor. vi. 11,) and is an appointed means of producing it. (Ephes. v. 26.) Our brethren reverse this order.

9. The apostle Peter says, "Baptism doth save us." And the apostle Paul, to the same purpose, says, "He saved us by the washing of regeneration," etc. Our brethren require us to be in a state of salvation prior to baptism; and, therefore, according to them, there is no sense in which we can be said to be saved by baptism.

I cannot find any other ends of the ordinance mentioned in the New Testament, than what are contained in the above particulars. Now as none of these ends are answered by the adult washings of our brethren, I am quite at a loss to know what utility they possess. All the above particulars apply to the baptism of infants of three years old; and the more important ones, to infants of any age. It is not necessary that all the ends of baptism should meet in every individual who receives it. Our Lord was not baptized unto repentance; or for the remission of sins; but that he might be enabled to fulfill all righteousness.

Though none of the scriptural reasons of baptism

apply to modern adult washings, yet I will not take upon me to say that they are not accepted of God, where no other has been had ; for I know the divine goodness will condescend much to human weakness and infirmity : but when this unscriptural dipping is imposed upon persons who received the rite in infancy, or in childhood, according to all the principal scriptural intentions of it ; I look upon the latter ceremony as worse than useless. Since the New Testament recognizes only " one baptism," there can be no difficulty, in this case, in determining which of the two ministrations is entitled to that appellation.

I hope by this time, my reader may be able to carry on a dialogue, somewhat like the following, with an advocate for modern, adult baptism. I have adopted this form for the purpose of explaining a few points more fully, than I could well have done in the usual style of writing.

Baptist. I have often admired your people for the attention they pay to many of the important truths of religion, and the experience which they have in the things of God ; but I cannot avoid expressing my surprise that those who profess, and, I hope, feel much love to Christ, should live in the neglect of one of his commands.

Methodist. I am not aware that they are justly chargeable with this. For myself, I am sure I am not conscious of any such omission.

B. You know baptism is a plain command. Our Lord, who enjoined it upon others, conformed to it himself, and it must be our duty to submit to it.

M. You surprise me. I was baptized in infancy, and I know of no command of Christ, or of any inspired writer, which requires us to be twice baptized in his name.

B. Infant sprinkling is not baptism. The intentions of the ordinance can only be answered when given to an adult.

M. As far as I understand the intentions of the ordinance, they have been answered in me ; and I do

not see that one scriptural object of the ordinance could be attained by submitting to it again, if I even doubted the propriety of infant sprinkling, as you term it. Would you give me apostolic baptism?

B. Certainly. You know the apostles baptized adults.

M. Yes; and I know they baptized children also.

B. But you do not know the ages of the children—that any of them were infants?

M. I know as much about the age of the children, as you do about the age of the adults, with the single exception of Jesus Christ; and you do not fix upon the age at which he received the ordinance, as the only proper period in life for it. But supposing, as I said, I am wrong, would you give me apostolic baptism?

B. Yes, to be sure—if you were qualified for it.

M. And what qualifications would you expect?

B. I should expect you to give a reasonable account of your conversion, and of your being justified by faith in Christ Jesus.

M. Now, sir, show me where the apostles required these qualifications?

B. Show you where!

M. Yes, sir, show me where.

B. Why sure you do not want me to point out all the texts in favour of believers' baptism. It is written—

M. You need not quote the texts for believers' baptism, unless you can show they mean justifying faith, and imply a work of grace on the heart of the subject.

B. I was not aware you would dispute that point. How will you prove that those who were believers prior to baptism, were not justified?

M. As you have taken upon you to say their faith was justifying, you are bound to prove it; but as I perceive you were not prepared for this turn in the conversation, I will undertake the task. The three thousand who on the day of pentecost “gladly

received the word," you suppose were justified ; but this could not be, because the apostle exhorted them to " be baptized for the remission of sins." You require forgiveness as a qualification ; you could not therefore, give me apostolic baptism : you would baptize me because I am forgiven, and that is never in scripture assigned as a reason for the ordinance. The baptism which I have received, answers to the apostolic order ; I received the ordinance first, and, thank God, have since received a pardon. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins ; and as the privilege has followed the ordinance, I feel perfectly satisfied. When you talk of the evidence of a work of grace on the heart of a candidate, I suppose you mean by a work of grace, the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

B. I do. We attribute all good in man to his gracious agency ; and we think it of the last importance to the purity of our churches, that those who are admitted members by the rite of baptism, should be previously born of the Spirit.

M. And where is this written ?

B. Why sure you would not have us receive persons into our churches, who have not first received the grace of God into their hearts.

M. I would have you receive them upon scriptural terms. Show me where the scriptures require people to qualify for baptism and church membership, by exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit.

B. I never supposed this point would be disputed.

M. Perhaps not. But I cannot find the possession of religion was ever insisted on by the apostles as a qualifying condition for the ordinance : they seem to have thought it enough, if religion succeeded to the rite. They did not calculate upon the world being so good a school of virtue as the church. If religion may be procured in the world, may it not be kept there ? and then, what occasion is there for church communion ? When the apostle Peter exhorted his terrified hearers on the day of pentecost to be baptized, he had

no idea that they were already in possession of the Holy Spirit; because he makes a promise of this heavenly gift, as a subsequent to the ordinance, and as an inducement to receive it. You wish me to receive your baptism. Will you then, without asking me questions about grace and religious experience, wash me in the water, promise me the Spirit, and add me to your church? You have confessed you would not. How then can you call yours apostolic baptism; when you demand, as a qualification for the rite, what the apostle promised as a consequence of it? Now I have received the rite, and, blessed be God, I have received the promise which the apostle annexed to it—the gift of the Holy Spirit. You will not say as the apostle did, “Be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;” and if you would, that could be no inducement to me to receive your washing, because I am in possession of the gift, in consequence of being baptized according to the apostolic order.

B. You seem to have forgotten the case of Cornelius, and his friends, who all received the Holy Spirit prior to their baptism.

M. Not at all. We are on the subject of the qualifying terms which the apostles required. Peter had said nothing respecting their reception of the Spirit, as a qualification for the rite. The account which he afterwards gave of it, shows it was an extraordinary manifestation, for the purpose of convincing the apostle that the gentiles were to have the gospel without circumcision; and as the end was answered, the previous spiritual baptism was never repeated. They were not, of course, baptized, that they might receive the gift of the Spirit; but there were other ends of baptism, which made it highly proper they should receive it. You will find it difficult, however, to show, that there is one apostolic end of baptism answered by your washing; and I am sure you cannot produce one instance of the apostles making the possession of the grace of the Spirit, a qualification for the ordinance. Not only the converts on the day of pentecost, but the

Samaritans, (Acts viii.,) and the Ephesians, (Acts xix.,) received the Holy Spirit subsequent to baptism; and in all the scriptural representations of the baptism of water and the Spirit, that of water, is always placed first. "I indeed baptize you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.... Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, etc.... He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."*

B. So then, it seems we may enter into the church without being either pardoned or renewed! Fill the church full of such characters, and explain to me how they can be, what our Lord requires his church to be, —the light of the world? I am afraid their light will be very dim!

M. Your remarks might be felt, if they continued in the church as graceless as they entered. But you are to recollect that the baptism of the apostles was for the remission of sins, and the gift of the Spirit; and when these promised blessings were conferred upon the initiated, they would shine as the lights of the world, and act as the salt of the earth.

B. But suppose some of them should stop short of these privileges, and continue in sin, what would you do?

M. I would do as the apostle directs, "Put away from you that wicked person." If the rite were delayed till they had religion in possession, how could they be baptized unto repentance?

B. I must beg leave to remind you, that the apostle, in your favourite passage, (Acts ii. 38,) places repentance before baptism: "Repent and be baptized."

M. I cannot perceive any contradiction in the two

* I know there are some baptists, who do not believe the Holy Spirit is now given; and they would offer M. the ordinance without the qualification in dispute. But unless they could point out to him some scriptural end which has not been answered by his infant sprinkling, I presume he would decline, I hope very politely, their adult immersion.

texts. Look at the fact. The three thousand who were exhorted to repent and be baptized, received the ordinance, we read, the same day ; so that the business must have commenced immediately. Like John's disciples, therefore, they must have been baptized "unto repentance." Baptism, by initiating them into the christian church, placed them in new relations to God and his people, entailed upon them the highest privileges, and laid them under the strongest obligations to repent of their past sins, and live new lives. Now to bring the matter home,—I was baptized on the scripture plan, "unto repentance." I was by—

B. Stop a moment, sir, pardon my interruption, and permit me to ask, how an infant can be baptized unto repentance, who knows nothing of moral obligations, is incapable of repentance, and has no sin to repent of?

M. All the results of an ordinance are not immediate. John's baptism was introductory to that of the Spirit ; but a considerable time elapsed between the former and the latter. It appears from Acts viii., that the Samaritans did not receive the Spirit immediately after baptism. Simon Magus did not repent on his first entering into the church ; and when he manifested his hypocrisy afterwards, the apostle exhorted him to repent, without dropping any hint that the delay invalidated the ordinance. And if his baptism was good, though his repentance was delayed, I hope it is no argument against the validity of my baptism, that my repentance did not begin at the time I received it. I was by baptism admitted into the church of Christ, when an infant. As soon as my understanding begun to open, I found myself under a course of religious instruction and moral training ; it was here I learned and felt the obligation of repentance for my faults ; and it was here my heart was softened, by penitential grief, and my steps guided into the paths of life. I was baptized for the remission of sins, and in the church of Christ I found this invaluable blessing. You would not baptize me

unto repentance; and if you would, I do not need it, because your rite would not furnish me with the means of seeing this duty more clearly, or of feeling it more powerfully, or of practising it more perfectly, than I have been enabled to do, in consequence of my baptism in infancy. Unto what, then, would you baptize me?

Since you cannot produce a single instance of the apostles denying baptism to an adult, who professed to believe in the messiahship of Christ, although he had no christian experience; and since the New Testament abounds with examples of such applicants receiving the ordinance; give me leave to ask, whether you would baptize a person who should profess to believe that Christ is the Son of God, and express a desire to become a christian, without asking him any more questions?

B. Some of our ministers, I believe, would.

M. And would he be admitted into the baptist church in consequence?

B. That does not follow.* The members might not, perhaps, approve of him.

M. And has the minister a scriptural warrant to receive him, and the church a scriptural warrant to reject him? This looks rather odd.

B. The matter wants explaining.

M. I think so—go on, sir.

B. Ministers have the commission of Christ to baptize, and there are many instances in the New Testament of their acting under this commission without consulting the church.

M. I grant it. In most of these instances, there was no church to consult; and where there was, I do not find that the apostles asked the advice of these

* In the New Evangelical Magazine for May, 1821, there is a long letter from a baptist minister, in which he attempts to show that he has a right to baptize as many persons as he may think proper, without consulting the members of his church; though he admits that such persons have no right to communion in his church, unless the members approve of them.

brethren :—I suppose they thought the commission of their Master sufficient authority, without consulting any other. Now, sir, be so kind as to inform me, how the church acquired the right to reject a person whom the Lord has given their minister a right to receive.

B. In a church there are other officers besides the minister; and he has no right to admit members among them, without their consent.

M. Then I should say, he has no right to baptize without their consent; for the same master cannot give one class of servants a right which is opposed to the right of another; this clearly implies a contradiction.

B. You get on rather too fast. The right of the minister, in the case under consideration, is not to admit into any particular church at present existing; but to baptize into the church of Christ generally. By baptism, a person becomes a member of Christ's universal church, though he be not admitted into any particular church; the members of a particular church have a right to judge of his fitness, and to reject him, if they should not be satisfied.

M. Why, herein is a marvellous thing! The man, you grant, is lawfully admitted a member of the universal church of Christ; and yet all the particular churches which are included in that universal church, have a right to reject him! for I hope you will not deny that all other churches have as much right, as a baptist church has, to refuse him communion.

B. We do not deny that baptisms generally are into particular churches; but there may be cases to the contrary. The Ethiopian eunuch could not be baptized into a particular church, because there was no church either where he received the ordinance, or whither he was going. And that churches have a right to judge respecting the admission of baptized persons, is clear from the case of Paul. When he assayed to join himself to the church at Jerusalem, they demurred, till they received satisfaction as to his conversion.

M. Your first instance is not to the point at all, as to the right of churches to refuse baptized persons; for, according to your own showing, he had no opportunity of offering himself to a particular church. In all similar cases, however, it is proper a man should have the ordinance; because he is then qualified to receive it; and he may be a means of gathering a people unto Christ. If tradition may be credited, this man introduced the gospel into Abyssinia. Your second instance is not much more to the purpose. The reluctance which the church at Jerusalem felt to receive Paul, was owing to their doubt as to whether he was a disciple; and when a minister—Barnabas—informed the apostles, not the church, of his conversion, he was immediately received, “and was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.” (Acts ix. 26—28.) If you could make out a case in which a church has a right to reject a person; it must follow, that their minister has no right to baptize him. How strange to talk of churches having authority to reject those who are properly baptized into the church of Christ! If Christ open the door of his church, to a person against whom the door of a baptist church is closed, I will leave the reader to draw the inference.

Take another view of this subject. The minister who has baptized the person in question, is supposed to be a minister of Christ; and we will further suppose, what is not at all improbable, that the baptized person is the neighbour of the minister. Now since the minister has established the pastoral relation with this man, and has an opportunity, he owes to this man pastoral duties. He cannot justly refuse him the Lord's supper. What a singular state of things! And yet because the church will not receive him, the minister does not receive him to the Lord's table, or grant him any privilege of the church of Christ.

Suppose, then, I could get the baptism in question, what advantage should I derive from it?

B. You are perpetually talking about advantages, as though you would do nothing for Christ, except you

were paid for it. Is there then no consolation to be derived from showing our love to Christ in keeping his commandments, from fulfilling all righteousness, and from receiving the counsel of God ?

M. Very consolatory indeed ! to know that Jesus Christ has admitted me into his universal kingdom, but has authorized his servants to drive me by persecution, from every visible spot in it ! I have always understood, that in keeping his commandments there is great reward. Not one solitary instance can be produced of a person being denied admission into an apostolic church, after his baptism had been notified in it. Wherever there was a church, baptized persons were admitted into it ; and where none previously existed, they were formed into one. To baptize a person, and then deny him membership, is a shocking profanation of the ordinance.

To come to another point : the apostles, according to the commission of Christ, baptized people, and then taught them the peculiarities of his religion. I was first baptized, and then taught ; mine, therefore, in this particular, agrees with apostolic baptism. But you would subject me to a close examination, as to my knowledge of the doctrines and duties of christianity, before you would give me the ordinance ; and if not satisfied as to my proficiency, would deny it me. Where is your apostolical authority for this ?

B. Though we should require some knowledge of Christ as a qualification, yet you would be regularly instructed in the christian religion, after your admission into the church.

M. You do not, I believe, profess to teach christianity better than other ministers. You do not dissent from other christians because they do not understand religion, but because you conceive they do not rightly administer the initiatory rite. As it respects the doctrines and duties of religion, I hope you will admit that our ministers are as well qualified to teach them as yours.

B. Why, yes ; they possibly may.

M. Then I am receiving this end of baptism in the church to which I belong, as fully as I could do in your church. Now why should I renounce the baptism I have received, and the church to which I belong, for your washing and fellowship, when nothing is to be gained by the change?

Though you profess to teach people after you baptize them, yet what do you teach them which they did not know before? You baptize people, not that you may instruct them in christianity, but because they already understand it. Your subsequent teaching is only a repetition of truths with which they were previously acquainted. The apostles first initiated people, and then instructed them in the nature of christianity; you first instruct them in the nature of christianity, then initiate them; and afterwards merely confirm them in the truth.

When I received the ordinance, I was "baptized into Christ," and afterwards "put on Christ," according to the apostolic order; and before you can give me this christian baptism, I must not only renounce my infant sprinkling, but I must also renounce Christ himself. And were I to do this, and afterwards feel desirous of becoming a christian again, would you baptize me into Christ, that I might put him on?

B. We should not deny you baptism, if we had reason to believe you were truly serious.

M. I know what you mean. If I professed justifying faith, and gave evidence of a work of grace on my heart, that is, if I were already in Christ, and had put him on, then you would baptize me—into what? So, it seems, you would not give me baptism, as the apostles administered it, if you could; and, you could not give it if you would; because Christ is now mine and I am his.

Do you baptize people "into death," as the apostles did? By this phrase I understand a death unto sin.

B. And do you really believe people become dead to sin by baptism? Why surely you will make your

infant sprinkling work miracles ! If sin, however, does become dead at the time of baptism, it has, in most cases, a speedy resurrection.

M. The text must have some meaning. Look at it. (Rom. vi. 1—11.) I have not said that this death actually takes place at baptism ; and I fear, in many instances, it never takes place at all. But do have the goodness to inform me what you think is intended by death, in verse 4 ?

B. I cannot deny, on looking at the context, that the apostle means a death unto sin ; but he cannot intend to convey the idea that this death occurs at the time the ordinance is administered. It is not the fact, but the obligation, which he is there treating on : “ We should walk in newness of life.” We admit that baptized persons are under an obligation to die to sin.

M. I receive your interpretation. But if, by our baptism, we are brought under the obligation to die to sin, then the obligation to baptism must be prior, in the order of time, to the obligation to obedience. You say, “ baptized persons are under an obligation to die to sin.” But what brings them under it ?

B. Their being the subjects of God’s moral government, obliges them to keep his laws.

M. Is that obligation independent of baptism ?

B. Baptism is certainly commanded.

M. Which are we to attend to first ?—the positive institute, or the moral precepts ?

B. We ought to give proof of a work of grace on the heart, by keeping the commandments, before we are baptized.

M. This favourite opinion of yours must be brought in, though it stands opposed to the whole current of scripture.

1. A death unto sin, and a new life, are the fruits meet for repentance ; and if these precede baptism, we cannot be baptized “ unto repentance,” and we cannot be baptized into this death unto sin and newness of life.

2. Our Lord places baptism before the knowledge

of obedience; and, therefore, of necessity, before the practice of it. "Baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." If they have to learn the commandments after, they cannot obey them before, they receive the ordinance.

3. They cannot keep the commandments in their own strength, and out of Christ; they must be endowed with power from on high; they must be united to Christ; this you will grant. But the apostle, as we have abundantly proved, places baptism before the gift of the Holy Spirit, and affirms, that we are "baptized into Christ."

4. The laws of a kingdom cannot be binding upon a person, before he is permitted to become a subject of it. The kingdom of Christ on earth is his church; the laws of Christ form that sacred code by which the members of his church are to regulate their conduct; baptism is the rite of initiation into his church; it follows, that these laws cannot be obligatory on a person who is denied the ordinance. We should think it very strange to hear it affirmed, that a foreigner is obliged to obey the laws of England, before he is admitted to the rights of a subject.

We see, then, how baptism admits us into a state of death unto sin, and into a new life unto righteousness. By the rite we are taken out of a wicked world, and planted in God's holy church, where we die to our former wicked life, learn to live a life of holiness, and receive the Holy Spirit, to enable us to practise what we learn.

B. If baptism, as you affirm, is to precede the knowledge as well as the practice of christianity, what inducement can you offer to an adult heathen to receive the rite? He will very naturally say, I should like to understand something of christianity, before I am baptized and become a christian.

M. Very proper. He should know something about it. He should be told that Jesus Christ came down from heaven to instruct mankind in the things

belonging to their peace; and the evidences of the Saviour's heavenly mission should be laid before him; the obligation to become a christian should be impressed upon his mind; and the excellency of the christian religion should be represented to him in the holy lives of its professors. He will then understand its truth, necessity, and value; and I cannot find that the apostles delayed baptism a day after this, to any one who desired it.

It is, in fact, just the same with christianity as with all the arts and sciences. A man must have some general knowledge of them, before he will consent to be instructed fully in them. No one will put himself under the instructions of a professor of astronomy, who has no knowledge of the nature and utility of the science; and, on the other hand I may add, that no one will become the pupil of an astronomer, who knows as much of the science as the professor can teach him. We may know something of the nature and utility of a trade, and yet not be able to work at it till we have been taught by a master.

Having proved that baptism, according to the apostle, is to precede the practice of christianity; it will not be difficult to settle another point, namely, the age at which the child of a christian parent ought to be initiated. It must be instructed as soon as it is capable of taking in the knowledge of morality. But a child of two or three years of age may be made to understand and practise some branches of morality; it follows that, since baptism is to precede the christian life, a child ought to receive the ordinance prior to the age just stated.

B. But suppose the little folks should not be willing to practise christian morality?

M. Then the parents must make them; just the same as an apprentice boy must be made to work at his master's business. The apostle has informed christian parents, that they must have faithful children.

B. I wish you would look a little at one phrase in this favourite text of yours. The apostle says, "We

are buried with Christ by baptism." This passage, of itself, is sufficient to prove that your sprinkling is no baptism; for a person cannot, by any allowable sense of the term, be said to be buried, by a few drops of water falling on the head.

M. You know we are not now discussing the mode. This text shall be attended to when we come to that point. What the apostle teaches in the passage in question is, the obligation which results from baptism; not, how the rite is to be performed. Do you think he supposed the obligation to be proportioned to the quantity of water used? If so, a dip in the sea would be the best mode. But it will quite spoil your argument, just to remind you, that the apostle is not speaking of the burial of the body, but of the burial of sin in baptism. It does not contain the slightest hint respecting the mode.

Baptism is here placed at the commencement of a christian life. This was the case with me. I was baptized in infancy; and, blessed be the Lord, the end has been answered; I am walking in the paths of obedience. I say of this, as I have said respecting preceding particulars, you cannot give me this apostolic baptism if you would; for you cannot place me again at the commencement of christianity; and you would not give it me if you could; for you would require me to renounce sin, and live to God, before you would administer it.

I think you and your friends err very much, in not attending to what is attributed to baptism, in the New Testament. It is said to save us. (See 1 Peter iii. 21; Titus iii. 5.)

B. I must confess your conversation very much surprises me. Your friends, in general, consider the ordinance as a matter of very little importance; hence many who are convinced that believers' baptism is the most scriptural, satisfy their consciences while living in the neglect of it, by saying, "We have got the main thing; baptism cannot save us." Whereas you turn round upon us and affirm, what we, who are so often

accused of overrating its importance, dare not venture to say, that it is a saving ordinance.

M. Many of those who think that believers' baptism is most scriptural, have received infant baptism; and they have serious scruples respecting receiving the ordinance again. They are not convinced by what you say, that infant sprinkling is no baptism; they think, if it be imperfect, it may be accepted of God; and they can find nothing in the scriptures to countenance a repetition of the rite. Their having received the salvation of God is proof sufficient to them, that your ordinance, in addition to that they have received, is not necessary to salvation; and as they have scruples as to the propriety of submitting to it again, they think it safest to hold fast what they at present enjoy, and not run the risk of losing it by taking a step, of the lawfulness of which they have serious doubts; and in this they are right: no wise man will blunder headlong on a doubtful path.

As to baptism saving us, it does not this of itself. I am no advocate for baptismal regeneration, as it is termed; but judge the popular sentiment upon that subject to be a very dangerous error. In the former of the texts alluded to, the apostle Peter guards against mistake, by directing his readers to lay the principle stress, not on putting away of the filth of the flesh, but on the answer of a good conscience toward God. And the apostle Paul in the latter, connects with the washing of regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Ghost. It is this renewing which saves immediately; the washing saves only mediately, as introductory to it.

B. Very well, and how does this make against our baptism, and in favour of yours?

M. You require people to be saved before you baptize them; and then there is no sense, either directly or remotely, in which baptism can save them.

B. We do not expect them to be saved into heaven before we give them the ordinance; and after they

receive it, they are brought under the influence of a system of means which operates powerfully in promoting their eternal salvation; I cannot, therefore, perceive what advantages in this respect your baptism can possess over ours.

M. The apostles are not speaking of eternal, but of present salvation. Peter saith, "Baptism doth now save us." And Paul saith, "He saved us by the washing," etc. The salvation alluded to is styled by the former apostle, "The answer of a good conscience toward God," and by the latter, "The renewing of the Holy Ghost." These are only different forms of expression for the same thing. No man can have a good conscience without the renewing of the Spirit, nor the renewing of the Spirit without a good conscience. This salvation is, by both apostles, represented as subsequent to the rite; which exactly corresponds with our views of the ordinance. You say a candidate must have the Holy Spirit and a good conscience as qualifications for baptism, and, therefore, upon your plan, they cannot in any sense be saved by it.

This view of the subject will settle the time when the ordinance should be given. It should be prior to the employment of that system of means which God has appointed in his church, not out of it, for the purpose of bringing his creatures into a state of salvation. And as the apostle has commanded parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, those means must be employed upon them in infancy. Baptize a child, then, in infancy, and God, according to his promise, (Acts ii. 39,) will impart to it the gift of the Spirit. Under the operation of the prescribed means, the little one will be prepared, when it comes to have a conscience, to give the answer of a good one.

Here again I say, you cannot give me this apostolic baptism if you would; for, by grace I am saved; and you would not give it me if you could; for you would require me to be in a state of salvation, as a qualifying

condition, and thus preclude the possibility of my being saved by baptism.

I now appeal to the reader, whether one of the intentions of baptism, as explained in the New Testament, is answered by the adult washing of those who received the ordinance in infancy; and whether all these intentions are not fully answered in many cases of infant baptism?

There is one consideration commonly lost sight of in this controversy, and that is, whether it may not be sinful in a person to receive modern adult baptism, after having received the ordinance in infancy. I hope no one will be offended at my proposing this question. I have a strong persuasion on the affirmative side; and as those who think the practice a duty, express a desire to be convinced of their error, if they be really in one, they should not be displeased at a conscientious attempt to point it out, even if the proof fail to produce conviction.

1. If I have succeeded in this book, in proving the lawfulness of infant baptism, the repetition of the ordinance, it will be allowed on all hands, is unlawful; it is not merely an addition to an ordinance, which all agree should be received but once; but it implies a rejection of God's ordinance, which had been received; and a substitution of a human invention in the place of it, which must be sinful both in the administrator and the subject.

2. Religious people, who received the ordinance in infancy, are in possession of all the scriptural ends of it. If they receive it again, they cannot have it upon apostolic principles, without renouncing all their experience in the grace of God, and placing themselves again at the commencement of the christian life; which, if it were possible, would be very wicked. If they hold fast their religious attainments, and receive the rite again, it is not a baptism "unto repentance," nor "for the remission of sins," nor "into Christ," nor in order to "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," nor, in fact, is one scriptural intention of the ordinance an-

swered by it; and if this be not a sinful prostitution of it, what is?

All the importance of baptism arises from the station it holds in the christian economy. Besides the high privileges to which it is introductory, as just stated; we are said to be sanctified by it, (Ephes. v. 26,) and saved by it. (Titus iii. 5; 1 Peter iii. 21.) And according to our Lord, there was no salvation without it; for he declared, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.) All this is true enough, upon the principles established in this work; for if the ordinance be placed at the commencement of a christian life; and if neither Christ nor the apostles would divulge the mysteries of the kingdom to the uninitiated, it was impossible for a person to be saved without baptism. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Faith could no more save without the ordinance, than the ordinance could save without faith; if we attend to the gospel order of means. The faith of an unbaptized person related merely to the person of Christ, as a divine teacher; but those who recognized him in this character, and wished to learn the doctrines of salvation, were initiated as disciples, or scholars, by baptism. He, then, who believed in the person of Christ, but rejected his baptism, could not believe in his doctrines; because, by refusing the ordinance, he refused to learn them, since they were communicated to none but disciples; and no man can believe doctrines which he has not been taught, and which he refuses to learn. When, therefore, faith in the heavenly mission of our Saviour was unaccompanied with baptism, this circumstance showed a voluntary and criminal rejection of his message; on which account this faith, instead of saving, only led to the greater damnation. As baptism, therefore, was the rite by which people went over from the world into the church, where they learned the way of salvation, and received all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus; we need not wonder to hear it spoken of in such

high terms ; though the effects attributed to it, were brought about by other means, to which it was only introductory. Nothing is more common with the sacred writers, and indeed with all writers, than to ascribe effects to some one, and often to the first, in a series of means ; when the one fixed upon was only remotely connected with others, by which the effects were produced more immediately. Many of the ancient fathers erred most egregiously, in attributing to baptism directly, what scripture imputes to it only as a remote cause, namely, the washing away of sin, regeneration, and salvation. Whereas faith in the atonement of Christ, procures forgiveness ; the renewing of the Holy Spirit produces regeneration and sanctification ; and the grace of God in its various manifestations, suited to our circumstances, completes our salvation.

Our brethren have taken the rite out of its proper place, and put it after repentance, justification, and regeneration. From the situation it holds in their system, the errors of the fathers and many of the moderns they say, are avoided : they steer clear of baptismal washing away of sin, and baptismal regeneration. It is very true they do ; but in doing this they have removed the rite from the ground on which scripture has placed it : they do not baptize in order to teach, nor unto repentance, nor for the remission of sin, nor for the gift of the Spirit, nor for any purpose mentioned in the word of God. I hope I have kept free from the errors in question, without altering its scriptural position.

When we view baptism in the station assigned to it in the New Testament, it appears to be of the highest importance. A person who neglected it, had no ordinary means of obtaining salvation. But it is so far from being necessary to salvation, in its new situation, that I cannot perceive it is necessary on any account whatever. What may be the amount of the evil arising from the change which our brethren have introduced, it becomes them seriously to consider. It may

be thought by some a matter of very little moment when the rite is received, if it be but submitted to. But our baptist friends cannot think so. Without being frightened at the noisy declamation of bigots against the damnable sin of schism, every good man will allow that unnecessary divisions are sins of some magnitude; especially when the dividers leave the truth, and make their error the reason for their separation. The difference between baptists and other christians on the subject of the ordinance, is the avowed principle upon which the baptist churches are gathered. If they had truth on their side, it would admit of dispute whether it were of sufficient consequence to justify a separate communion; but if, as I think I have demonstrated, they are in error upon this subject, it cannot be a venial one. Besides, if I have established my main positions, they have completely altered the terms of admission into the church, and made them much more difficult than those appointed by its divine founder: and this is surely a matter of considerable moment.

Place the ordinance, as the New Testament does, at the commencement of christianity; and admit, what the apostle commands, that parents are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and the consequence is undeniable, that these children ought to be baptized in infancy, before you begin with their religious education, and that this is the only period at which it is lawful to give them the ordinance.

I have furnished, in the two concluding pages, a number of texts in the left-hand columns, which establish the principles of pedobaptism; and in the right-hand columns, I have amended these texts, to make them agree with the practice of our brethren: the reader is left to make his own remarks.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (Mark i. 4.)

John "preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." (Mark i. 7, 8.)

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." (Matt. iii. 11.)

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.)

"Go ye and make disciples of all nations: baptizing them .. and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Marginal reading.)

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 38.)

"When Peter and John were come down, they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." (Acts viii. 15—17.)

AMENDED VERSION.

John did preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and then baptized in the wilderness.

John preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have not baptized you, and will not baptize you, with water, till he shall have baptized you with the Holy Ghost.

I indeed will not baptize you with water, till ye have brought forth fruits meet for repentance.

Except a man be born of the Spirit and of water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Go ye and make disciples of all nations; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and baptizing them.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent and believe, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then ye shall be baptized.

When Peter and John were come down, they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them). And they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Then they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them." (Acts xix. 5, 6.)

"And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii. 16.)

"But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified." (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

"As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 27.)

"Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word." (Ephes. v. 25, 26.)

"According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus iii. 5.)

When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them. And when they felt this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And now tarry awhile, and believe away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord; and then arise and be baptized.

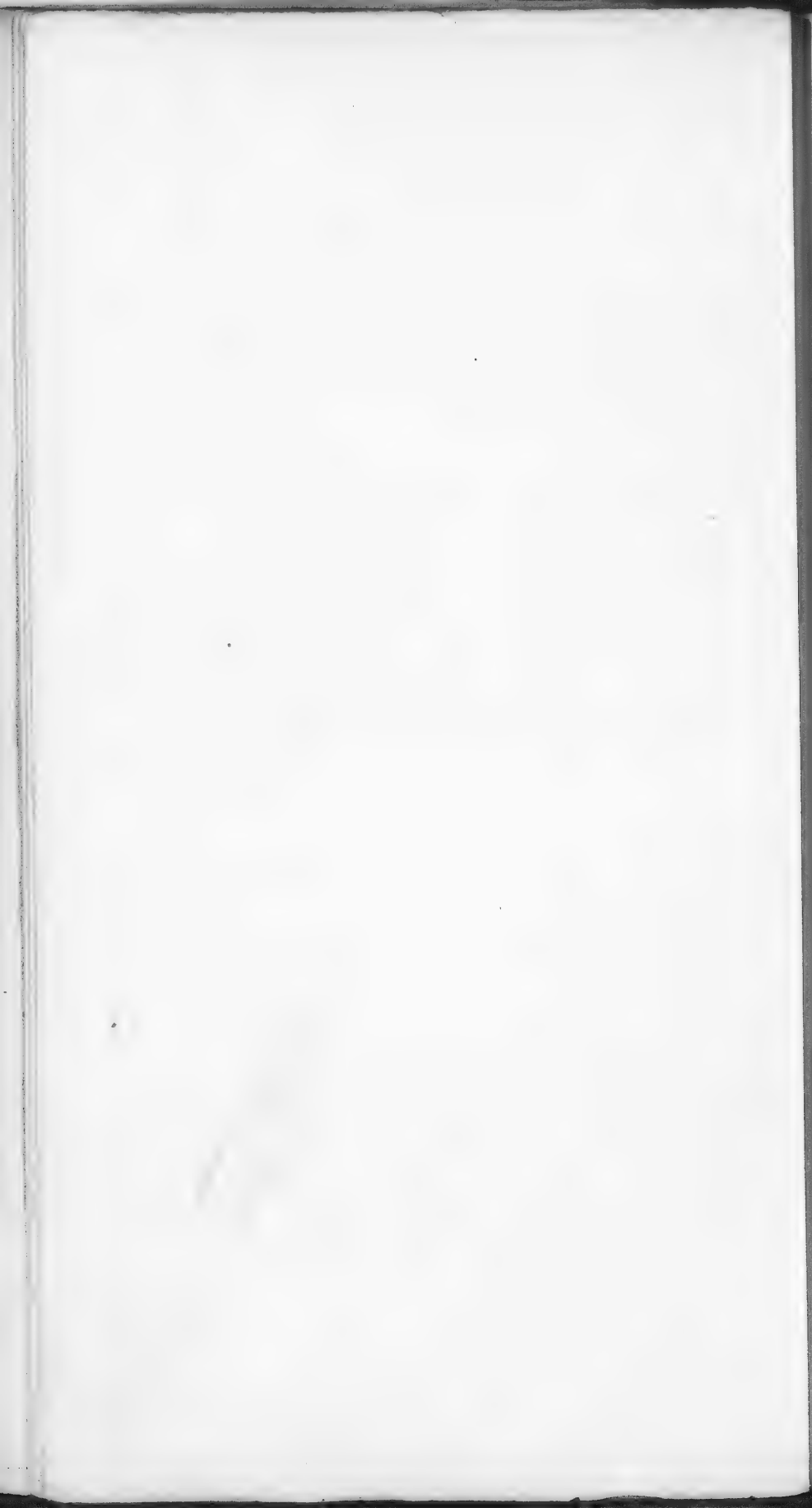
But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, but ye are washed.

As many of you as have been in Christ, and have put on Christ, have since been baptized.

Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the word, and then wash it with water.

According to his mercy he saved us, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and washing of regeneration.

ESSAY ON THE WORD AMEN.



ESSAY ON THE WORD AMEN.

"AMEN is a Hebrew word, formed from the verb *aman*, which, in the passive voice, signifies to be true, faithful, etc.

"There is also formed from this noun a kind of affirmative adverb, signifying truly, verily.

"The rabbins are of opinion that the word amen is formed from the initial letters of *Adonia*, *Melech Neeman*, the Lord, the faithful king; an expression common among the Jews, when they would add weight or sanction to what they affirmed."*

In the sacred scriptures it is sometimes prefixed to what is asserted; thus giving notice that some important truth is coming, that the mind may receive it with due reverence. In these cases it is rendered verily. "Verily, verily" amen, amen, "I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Verily, verily" amen, amen, "I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my name, he will give it you." (John iii. 3; xvi. 23.)

This word is put at the close of each of the evangelists, and most of the epistles, as an affirmation of the truth of those writings. It is also used to denote the veracity and faithfulness of Christ in his word and promises. "These things saith the amen, the faithful and true witness." "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen." (Rev. iii. 14; 2 Cor. i. 20.)

But I intend to consider it chiefly in relation to the

* See Crocker's Dictionary and Rees's Cyclop.

public worship of God. Were all the worshippers to repeat their prayers vocally after the minister, the house of God would present a strange scene of confusion. And, on the other hand, were the people to take no active part in their devotions, their minds, on account of the natural indisposition of man to such exercises, would wander from God, and his service become a mere form of godliness, without the power. By the whole congregation joining in a hearty amen, at the close of each sentence, they express their approbation of the prayers of the minister, and a desire that God would graciously regard them; thus disorder is avoided, and the attention is kept awake: it is hardly possible to wait upon God in this manner, and not worship him in spirit and in truth.

The people should say amen to praise and thanksgiving. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever: And all the people said amen, and praised the Lord." (1 Chron. xvi. 36.)

They should also say amen to supplication. "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory; amen, and amen." (Psalm lxxii. 19.) See also Matt. vi. 13, where we find this word at the end of the Lord's prayer.

The whole assembly should join in it. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, amen." "And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God: And all the people answered, amen, amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground." (Psalm cvi. 48; Nehem. viii. 6.)

It should be repeated at the close of each sentence, and not merely once at the close of the service. When the curses were denounced under the law, the people were commanded to say amen, at the end of each of them. This part of the service would not take up more than three or four minutes; and during that short period, all the people had to say, amen, twelve times. (See Deut. xxvii. 14—26.) If the whole assembly answered, amen, at the end of each curse, we

cannot surely suppose that they would omit it at the end of each blessing.*

I appears very evident from 1 Cor. xiv. 16, that the apostle intended the use of this word to be general and constant in the christian church. In this chapter he corrects many abuses which had crept into divine worship, and lays down rules by which it might be conducted decently, and in order; among other things, he directs that the service be performed in language familiar to the worshippers, that he that occupieth the room of the unlearned may say amen, at the giving of thanks.

Accordingly we find that this custom obtained universally, in the primitive church. Mosheim, in his history of the first century, speaking of the bread and wine used at the Lord's supper, says, "This was consecrated by certain prayers pronounced by the bishop alone, in which the people assented by saying amen."†

Justin Martyr, who lived about 160 years after Christ, says, "The head minister offereth prayers and thanksgiving with all his power, and the people answer, amen."‡

Dionysius was made bishop of Alexandria in the year of our Lord, 248. In his fifth epistle to Sixtus, bishop of Rome, concerning the baptism of heretics, are these words, "I durst not rebaptize one who had heard the giving of thanks, and had, together with the congregation, said amen to it."§ Valesius, in a note upon these words, remarks, "When the priest had finished the solemn prayers at the eucharist, all the people with a joint acclamation used to say aloud, amen, that is, so be it. We must understand that

* The person who prays vocally should make a pause at the end of each sentence, that the congregation may have an opportunity of responding, without losing any part of the prayer, or creating any confusion.

† Eccles. Hist., vol. i., p. 128, last edit.

‡ Hom. of Ch. of Eng. on Com. Prayer and Sacrament.

§ Euseb. Hist. of the Ch., book vii., chap. 9.

place of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. 16, to be spoken in reference to this custom."

Basil and Chrysostom directed "the people to answer to the prayers of the minister, sometimes amen, sometimes, Lord have mercy upon us, etc." The same Basil saith, "If the sea be fair, how is not the assembly of the congregation much more fair, in which a joined sound of men, women, and children, (as it were of the waves beating on the shore,) is sent forth in our prayers unto God." And Chrysostom, upon the words of Paul, saith, "So soon as the people hear these words, world without end, they do forthwith answer, amen."* Basil was made bishop of Cæsarea in the year of our Lord 369. Chrysostom was made reader of the church of Antioch about the year 370: he was afterwards made bishop of Constantinople.

"Some have thought it expedient," says Dr. Ridgley, "in joint prayer, for the whole assembly, together with him that is the mouth thereof, to say, amen, with a loud voice, and thereby to signify their consent to, and concern in, the subject matter contained therein; which appears to have been the practice of the church in the early ages thereof; as Justin Martyr observes, it was in his time; and it was afterwards observed in Jerome's time, who compares the sound they made with their united voices, to that of thunder."†

Dr. Stillingfleet, bishop of Gloucester, in his exposition of the church catechism, upon the word amen, pp. 161, 162, has these words, "This amen is not to be said by one only, but by the whole congregation. And he that neglects to say amen to the suite, deserves to have no share in the grant—which that it be not coldly and faintly done, our amens at the end of the prayer should be like that of the primitive christians, who sounded amen with that fervour, zeal, and heat, that he that heard the echo of their zealous tongues,

* Homily on Common Prayer and Sacrament.

† Body of Divinity, p. 694, third edit.

might suppose he heard the voice of the roaring sea, or the mighty voice of a powerful thunder."

These testimonies are more than sufficient to show what was the practice of the church of Christ, for the first four centuries. The many and great corruptions which were afterwards introduced into divine worship, render it unnecessary to prosecute this inquiry any further.

In the present day, this word is nearly grown into disuse. It is true, it is repeated several times during the service of the church of England; but not by the whole assembly, according to ancient custom. They hire a person to say amen for them, and rest contented with serving God by proxy. The dissenters have so far degenerated from the primitive practice, that they use no responses at all. Among the Methodists we sometimes hear the word amen, but it is used only by a few; and these few generally speak in so low a tone, that one would suppose they were afraid of detection.

Objection 1. "Is it not sufficient to lift up the heart to God, and *silently* express our acquiescence in the prayers offered up by the minister in our name?" I think not. Can you alter the order of God, without making it worse? Is conformity to that order more than sufficient? God has directed that all the people shall answer and say, amen.

Objection 2. "But there is no necessity to say amen, aloud." Perhaps not: neither is there any sin in it. There is no command about the precise height to which the voice ought to be elevated in this, any more than in the other parts of divine worship; and, therefore, if excesses be avoided, liberty should be allowed. No one ought to be suspected of a want of vital religion, because he does not *shout* in his religious exercises. A man's sincerity is not to be estimated by the strength of his lungs. We might as well make noise the standard of orthodoxy, as the test of piety. And, on the other hand, no man ought to be called a fanatic, or an enthusiast, for serving God with a *loud voice*. He may very easily justify his conduct from the Bible.

After the great slaughter of the Benjamites, "the people came to the house of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept sore; and said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?" (Judges xxi. 2, 3.) When the foundation of the second temple was laid, "all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord—they shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off." (Ezra iii. 10—13.) One of the ten lepers whom Jesus cleansed, "when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks." (Luke xvii. 15, 16.) The apostle John, speaking of the worship of God in heaven, says, "I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God." "And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God, that sat on the throne, saying, amen, hallelujah." "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, hallelujah; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (Rev. xix. 1—6.) The word amen is only found in one of these examples; but it is surely as lawful to speak this word with a loud voice, as others; and it ought to be noted, that it was used this once by the inhabitants of heaven, which is certainly very high authority.

It cannot well escape observation, what a striking resemblance there is between the worship performed in heaven, according to the apostle John, and that of the primitive christians, according to the bishop of Gloucester. In heaven the apostle "heard as it were the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings." Of the primitive christians, the bishop observes, "He that heard the echoes of their zealous tongues, might suppose he heard the voice of the roaring sea, or the mighty voice of a powerful thunder."

It must be granted, however, that to say amen with so much warmth, is very wrong, when not accompanied with great sincerity and earnestness of soul ; but the right temper of the mind is not to be disputed, where the life corresponds with the divine precepts ; and where there is this agreement of disposition and conduct, there is no discordancy in the ear of Heaven, in a loud amen. After all, we must keep in mind the differences in health, education, natural disposition, age, habit, etc. ; and then we shall be able to account for the different degrees of zeal in responses, without supposing a proportionate difference in spiritual attainments.

Objection 3. " But the noise which a revival of this custom would occasion, would disturb that composure and tranquillity of mind, which ought always to be preserved in the house of God." It is not quite clear that the mind should always be composed and tranquil in devotion. In confession of sin, must the mind be as composed as though nothing at all were the matter ? In supplication for mercy, should the sinner tranquilize his mind, when the wrath of God abides upon him, and the damnation of hell awaits him ? Can any, but the vilest hypocrites, address the supreme Being, without emotion, in such words as these, Lord have mercy upon us ! Christ have mercy upon us ! O Lord hear us ! O Christ hear us ! etc. In praising God for salvation by Jesus Christ, is it the unpardonable sin to feel anything like religious rapture ?

" O ye cold-hearted, frozen formalists !
On such a theme, 'tis impious to be calm ;
Passion is reason, transport temper, here."

This essay shall conclude with two or three observations on the use of saying amen, by religious assemblies.

It would be useful to the worshippers. It has already been remarked, that man is naturally indisposed to religious exercises. Even the truly pious find their

minds too prone to wander. But when the people have to respond, they must attend to the prayers of the minister; and when their attention is directed to its proper objects, they are in a fair way of receiving profit.

It would be useful to the minister. When the people take no active part in public worship, the minister has no proof that they worship God in spirit; their minds may be wandering, or they may be asleep. With this uncertainty, how can he feel at liberty in conducting their devotions? But when they say amen with spirit, he perceives that they are engaged with him at the throne of grace; this animates his soul—inflames his zeal—inspires him with confidence;—heaven descends,—and all in common share the general blessing.

This holy fervour in the worship of God, would be of service, even to the careless, in arresting their attention; seeing such seriousness and devotion could scarcely fail to produce conviction in their minds, and to kindle up in them the spirit of devotion. In that chapter where the apostle directs public worship to be so conducted, as that the people might say amen, he informs us what effect such order would have on the irreligious. “If all prophesy, (see Dr. Clarke’s Sermon on the Christian Prophet,) and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.” (1 Cor. xiv. 16, 24, 25.)

ESSAY ON SINGING.



PREFACE.

A THOUSAND things may be lawful, useful and necessary to man, which things, it is universally admitted, ought not to be introduced into a place of worship. When, therefore, the author objects to instrumental music in the house of God, he does not deny its soothing and cheering effect on the mind, nor the propriety of its use in places on suitable occasions. He is, in fact, very partial to music; and keeps an instrument in his house for amusement and recreation. He is not unaware, however, that in the family and social circle, it may be indulged in to excess: it should not occupy much of our time, nor be associated with anything that is not strictly innocent.

The reasons for sending this trifle abroad just now, are, the strong propensity which is manifested to introduce instruments into our places of worship, and the astonishing ignorance, as to facts, which prevails upon the subject. There are comparatively few of even our ministers, who do not take it for granted that instrumental music was used in the service of the synagogue, and was transferred from thence into the christian church; and who have any suspicion that, under the old dispensation, it was restricted to the priestly office. There is some little room to hope, therefore, that when they see the subject in its true light, they will make some efforts to restore the purity of divine worship. If any of them should be of opinion that the author is mistaken as to his main positions, he will feel obliged by their candid strictures. In giving publicity to these few pages, he is influenced by no other feelings than a sense of duty, and a concern for the honour of our Saviour.

The arguments employed in this little tract are directed against instruments of all kinds. Organs are undoubtedly the worst; because they make most noise, nearly drown the voice of those who sing, and render the words quite inaudible. Bass instruments are the least objectionable; because they do not interfere with the air of the tune, nor prevent the words which are sung being pretty distinctly heard. Since, however, they are all unlawful, they ought all to be laid aside; but if this point cannot be carried, those ought to be opposed most vigorously, which interfere most seriously with the simplicity of divine worship.

ESSAY ON SINGING.

PRIOR to the time of David, I am not sure that any instrument was employed in the public worship of almighty God, except the trumpet, which was sounded over the sacrifices by the priests. (Num. x. 8, 10.)

In connexion with the priests and their trumpets, David appointed the Levites to play various instruments of music, in sacrificial worship. Whether on this occasion he acted by divine authority or not, is a point which has been warmly disputed. Those who take the affirmative side of the question, refer to 2 Chronicles, xxix. 25, where it is said that Hezekiah, in restoring the use of instruments, was guided by the command of David, of Gad the seer, of Nathan the prophet, and of the Lord by his prophets. Those who incline to the negative refer to Amos vi. 5, where a woe is denounced against those "that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David;" from which passage it is supposed that David used the instruments, not only without divine authority, but in opposition to it. The difficulty may, perhaps, be cleared up by supposing that the prophet Amos alludes to the abuse of music, on convivial occasions.

Admitting, then, that David had the sanction of Heaven for introducing a great variety of instruments into public worship, no argument can be sustained on that ground in support of a similar practice under the gospel dispensation. To make this manifest, attend to the following particulars:—

1. None were appointed to play upon the instruments but priests and Levites. "And David spake to the chief of the Levites, to appoint their brethren

to be the singers, with instruments of music, psalteries, and harps, and cymbals, sounding by lifting up the voice with joy." "And David appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel: Asaph the chief, etc. with psalteries and with harps. Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God." "And the priests waited on their offices: the Levites also with instruments of music of the Lord, which David the king had made to praise the Lord, because his mercy endureth for ever, when David praised by their ministry; and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood." "And when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel, with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord after the ordinance of David king of Israel." (1 Chron. xv. 16; xvi. 4—6; 2 Chron. vii. 6; Ezra iii. 10.) See also 1 Chronicles xxv., where we find David divided the Levites into twenty-four companies, twelve in a company; and appointed them by turns to "prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals."

Priests and Levites were the only persons allowed to play on the instruments. Though David was an excellent performer on the harp, yet in the house of God he did not use it: there, "David praised by their ministry." The passage will explain his exhortations in the Psalms, to praise the Lord with harp, etc. He could not mean, contrary to his own institution and practice, that any one might use the instruments in God's house; but that the people should attend the sacrificial service, and praise the Lord with these instruments, as he himself did, by the ministry of the priests and Levites.

As the instruments were to be used by none but priests and Levites; and as we do not know of one in any of our churches who belongs to either the family of Aaron, or the tribe of Levi; the Jewish precedent

can be no authority to us. Had any Jew, who had sufficient skill, been eligible to take a part in this service, the advocates for the use of harps, etc., in the christian church, might have made out a rather stronger case; but since no person who did not belong to the priesthood was permitted to finger an instrument in public worship, this limitation is fatal to the argument drawn from the practice of the ancient church, by the christian apologist, in defence of a musical band in a christian assembly. When the Almighty has connected a restriction with a precedent, the restriction must accompany the precedent to every case to which it is applied; and as priests and Levites were the only musicians authorized under the law, we are not warranted by the example of the Jews to employ any others under the gospel.

2. The reason why none but priests and Levites were permitted to play on instruments in the worship of God, was, because this was a part of the priestly office. Hence, in performing this duty, the Levites were the assistants of the priests. "By the last words of David, the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above, because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord." "To stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even; and to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord," etc. (1 Chron. xxiii. 27 — 32.) "And Solomon appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service; and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every one required." (2 Chron. viii. 14.) These passages make it quite manifest that the Levites were the mere assistants of the priests in the discharge of their sacerdotal office, and that a part of their duty in this character was to minister before the priests in praising the Lord. If then the duty of praising the Lord was performed by playing upon instruments, it clearly follows that playing upon instruments was a part of the priestly office. And that they praised the Lord

with instruments is proved by the following texts: See 1 Chronicles xvi. 4 — 6, cited above; see also 1 Chronicles xxv. 3, 6, where we read of the six sons of Jeduthun "who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the Lord;" and of the fourteen sons of Heman, who, "were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the Lord with cymbals, psalteries and harps, for the service of the house of God."*

It will perhaps be objected, that it is every man's duty, as well as every priest's duty, to praise the Lord; and since this service is not peculiar to the sacred order, why may not others perform it in the same manner? Because, though others are required to praise the Lord, there is neither precept, nor precedent, nor intimation of any kind, that any person used an instrument in the Jewish worship who did not belong to the priesthood. This shows that though the duty was common, the manner in which it was performed by the sacred order was peculiar, and since the use of instruments in worship was restricted to the priesthood, they must have been abolished with it.

3. It is evident that the playing on instruments was a part of the sacrificial service, because the offering and the music began and ended together. "Ye shall blow with the trumpets over the burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings." "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David, king of Israel. And all the con-

* It is true that the Levites were given to be assistants to the priests, in the tabernacle service, (Num. viii. 19,) and were, therefore, under their direction in the service of God, from the first institution of the priesthood. (Num. iv. 19—27.) But when David, 470 years afterwards, with the approbation, if not at the command, of God, by his prophets Gad and Nathan, (see 2 Chron. xxix. 25,) introduced other instruments of music than the trumpet into God's service, he, not the priests, directed the heads of the Levites to appoint from among themselves proper persons to play on them. (1 Chron. xv. 16, 17, etc.)—EDIT.

gregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded : and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished." (Num. x. 10; 2 Chron. xxix. 27, 28.)

4. But what proves beyond contradiction that the playing on instruments in worship was a part of the priestly office, is, the remarkable fact, that the sound of instruments was never heard in any part of Jewish worship except that which was sacrificial. Nothing is more common than for persons who have not studied the subject to take for granted, as an indisputable fact, that the Jews used instruments in their regular and ordinary public worship. And they think, as this way of worship was common in religious assemblies under the law, and is not expressly forbidden under the gospel, it is not unlawful to christians. But the fact is, the Jews never esteemed the use of instruments lawful in any place of worship, except where the solemn sacrifices were offered. The synagogues were the regular places of worship for the greater part of the nation. Those who lived at a distance from Jerusalem were required to attend the services of the temple only thrice a year, which was at the celebration of the three great festivals. Now no writer, however warm an advocate for instrumental music, pretends that God was praised with the sound of trumpets, psalteries, and harps, in the service of the synagogue.

To what then does the Jewish example amount? There was only one place of worship among the Jews in which instruments were used. Now if all who urge this precedent would be content to follow it, and restrict the use of fiddles, and organs, to one place, I think the controversy would soon be ended. Let them go on pilgrimages to this metropolitan church as often as they please, and raise their devotional feelings as high as they can, with the scraping of catgut, and the blowing of bellows. The celebrated Dodwell, who wrote the most argumentative "Treatise concerning the Lawfulness of Instrumental Music in Holy Offices," which I have read, seems to have been

seriously of opinion, from the example of the Jews, that as long as a christian church existed at Jerusalem, it was unlawful to practise instrumental music in any other. "Supposing this music proper," he remarks, "for the Jerusalem sacrifices, as they were plainly in the temple of Jerusalem, there could be no pretences to them in any other church in the world, besides the head church of Jerusalem, where the first apostle had the same right over all the churches, as the high priest of the Jewish sanhedrim had over all the Jewish synagogues, in all their dispersions. This is an easy account why this practice of instrumental music might have been reserved to the apostolical church, till that church was utterly extinguished."* But he does not produce a particle of evidence that instruments were, in fact, used in the christian church of Jerusalem; he only supposes they might have been reserved to it.

The Jewish example not only restricts the use of the music to one place of worship, but also to the priestly office, and to the sacrificial service; but both that office and that service are abolished: and as they have no place under the gospel, the example does not apply to christians. The instruments were used only by sacrificial officers, only in the place where the victims were offered, and only from the commencement to the conclusion of the offering; they were not meddled with by other worshippers, or heard in any other place of worship, or employed in any other sacred service. This proves to demonstration that the music of the temple was connected with the priestly office, and restricted to it, and passed away from the church of God with all the other ceremonies of the Aaronical institution.

A few objections must now be noticed. 1. The case of Miriam and a company of women praising God with timbrels, is sometimes produced as a proof that instrumental music may be used with greater latitude, than I am willing to allow.

Miriam and her companions were not in a place of worship, performing their accustomed devotions; but were marching in procession, to meet and congratulate their friends, and to praise the Lord, on account of the signal deliverance he had wrought out for them. She "took a timbrel in her hand," and led the way; "and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances." They danced, we see, as well as played and sang; and this instance will afford just as much countenance to dancing, as to fiddling, in christian assemblies. The Jews often celebrated the victories they gained over their enemies, with songs of praise to God, accompanied with music and dancing. See Psalm lxxviii. 23 — 25, where we have a description of a procession. See also Psalm cxliv. 9, 10. It has been the custom with almost all nations to celebrate victories with processions, accompanied with martial music; but no one who has proper reverence for the house of God, would wish to have a military band performing in it.

2. There are many exhortations in the Psalms to praise the Lord with instruments of music; upon which many people lay great stress, as not only authorizing, but almost enjoining, their use in the celebration of divine praise, without any restriction as to persons, times, or places. Upon this it must be observed,—

1. That many of the Psalms are inscribed to the chief musician, to Asaph, to Jeduthun, etc., who were all levites. But their office was, as we have seen, to wait upon the priests, and to perform these sacred odes over the sacrifices. As the musical part of the sacrificial service devolved upon them, they had to set the Psalms to music, and to perfect themselves in the tunes, before they performed them in the presence of the congregation.

(2.) The Jews never gave such latitude of interpretation to the Psalms in question, as to think they authorized the use of instruments in all their places of worship; because, in point of fact, they were restricted

to the sacrificial service. And we are not to suppose that they were under a mistake in their restricted application of the commandments of David relative to this point; for they had a long succession of prophets, who must have set them right, had they been in error. The truth is, that instead of stopping short of the legitimate use of music, they indulged in it to excess. Hence the woe denounced against them by the prophet Amos. (Chap. vi. 5.) The prophet must refer to their musical performances, either in the temple, or in their other places of worship, or on social occasions. If the first, then the instruments were unlawful to the Jews in the worship of God, and their example is to be shunned rather than imitated. If the second, then the prophet restricted the use of instruments to the sacrificial service in the temple, which is fatal to the cause of the objector. If the last, which I think is really the case, then I infer, that the instruments were not used at that time in any other place of worship than the temple, or a people so passionately fond of them would have continued their use, and bands of musical performers would have regularly taken their part in the service of the synagogue.* But this, it is admitted by all writers, was not the case. We may also justly infer, that if they were in error in not using them in their other places of worship, the prophet would have reminded them of this omission, as readily as he censured their excessive indulgence in the social circle. There is, therefore, no evidence that David intended to extend the use of instruments in worship, beyond the sacrificial service, or that, in point of fact, they ever were used in any other.

Having shown that the practice of instrumental music in public worship, under the old dispensation, was limited to the priesthood, it necessarily follows that it was abolished along with the priesthood. It is,

* What is there, either in the text or context of Amos vi. 5, to warrant us in interpreting that passage as a reproof of an inordinate use of music and musical instruments in the worship of God?—EDIT.

therefore, no answer to say, as some do, that since this music was employed in worship, under the old dispensation, and is not expressly forbidden under the new, its use in our churches cannot be unlawful. No christian doubts whether the Aaronical priesthood be set aside by the priesthood of Christ; and if the whole levitical institution be repealed, every part of it is repealed, whether expressly named, or not. The use of censers, incense, altars, show-bread, etc., is not expressly forbidden in the New Testament; but since they belonged to the abolished service, it is as unlawful to bring them into the church of Christ, as if they had been particularly named in the act of repeal. It is exactly the same with regard to the music. The instruments were not excepted in the abrogation of the priesthood, and they are not restored by a new enactment under the gospel; it is therefore as unlawful to bring them, as any other levitical ceremonies, into the church of Christ.*

In the New Testament no mention is made of instrumental music in christian assemblies. We read of singing, not of playing, the praises of God in the church of Christ; and what is said of this singing cannot apply to instrumental performances. "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." "Teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." "Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." (1 Cor. xiv. 15; Col. iii. 16; Ephes. v. 19; James v. 13.) If playing were substituted for singing, in these passages, they would be ludicrous in the extreme. The praise offered to God by christians is expressly called, "the

* As music was not brought in with the levitical institution, but introduced long afterwards, by what line of argument can we conclude that it was to be abolished with it?—EDIT.

fruit of our lips." The passage is remarkable. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." (Heb. xiii. 15.) We have seen that the eucharistical sacrifices of the Hebrews were offered with the sound of trumpets, harps, etc. This epistle is addressed to Hebrews, who are exhorted to offer the christian eucharistical sacrifice: but instead of its being offered through the medium of Jewish priests and levites, as formerly, it must be offered by, or through him, that is, Christ; and instead of its being the fruit of divers instruments, as had been customary under the old dispensation, it must be "the fruit of our lips." The words, "that is, the fruit of our lips," are evidently explanatory, and must, therefore, be intended to mark a distinction between the christian and Jewish method of performing this service. The words "by him," are restricted to Christ, as the only medium through which the sacrifice of praise may be offered: and therefore the words, "the fruit of our lips," must be restricted to the human voice, as the only manner by which the duty may be performed; for the noise made by drums, and fiddles, and organs, cannot, by any figure of speech, be included in the apostle's meaning.

Attend a moment to the design of the writer. He had been treating at large on the Aaronical and christian priesthood. The former he had shown was a temporary and typical institution, that very imperfectly represented the priesthood of Christ, by which it was superseded. Now when an old institution is abolished, and a new one substituted in its place, no more of the old must be incorporated with the new than is expressly named in the law. This is universally admitted in civil affairs; and nothing has produced more confusion in the church than an obstinate disregard of this truism. In the christian priesthood the apostle remarks, there is but one sacrifice for sin, and that is Christ himself. He admits, however, that there is a figurative sacrifice, that of praise, to be offered by all

christians. Now we are not left in the dark as to how this sacrifice is to be offered; for the new law is remarkably explicit on this point. It is to be offered through Christ, which excludes the services of Jewish priests and levites; and it consists in "the fruit of our lips," which as effectually excludes the Jewish instruments.*

The instruments then were abolished with the priesthood to which they belonged; the gospel law, on the manner of praising God, not only makes no mention of them, but will not admit of their use; they are not once named in the New Testament in connexion with any of the institutions of christianity; no advocate for them pretends that they were used in the christian church during the apostolic age, or for some centuries after: and the necessary conclusion from all this is, that their introduction into our religious assemblies is a daring and criminal innovation.

Some, however, endeavour to make an argument out of the circumstance mentioned in the Revelation, of harpers harping with their harps in heaven. It is taken for granted that what is said to be done in heaven, may be done in the church on earth.

The apostle John not only saw these harpers with their harps, but he also saw in heaven a sea of glass, mingled with fire; and he saw these harpers, harping with their harps, "stand on the sea of glass." (Rev. xv. 1, 2.) There is just as much reason to interpret the sea of glass mingled with fire, and the harpers standing upon it, literally, as to interpret the harps literally; but no man in his sober senses can do either.

But supposing what the apostle saw were not realities, but only symbolical representations; yet it has been thought that he would not employ as symbols of the heavenly worship, things which would defile the worship of Christ on earth. This to some ears sounds like argument; but no skill can make these harps pro-

* This is leaping to a conclusion.—EDIT.

duce a sound argument. There is scarcely a symbol of heavenly worship in the book of Revelation which is not borrowed from the abolished service. The apostle speaks of a temple in heaven; of the four beasts, that is, the cherubim; of the four and twenty elders, which is a plain allusion to the Jewish elders; of an altar; of a slaughtered lamb; of censers and incense; and of angels in the habit of priests and levites, with their vials and harps, etc. The argument would allow christians the use of nearly the whole Jewish apparatus, just as well as the use of the harp; for John saw the rites and ceremonies of the legal dispensation practised in heaven. But can anything be more preposterous than to suppose that these allusions to the sacrificial service are a sufficient warrant for christians to use it?

Instrumental music is supposed to have a soothing and cheering effect upon the mind, and thus to prepare it for the reception of those gracious influences which are the chief ends of worship; and a practice which has so salutary a tendency, it is contended, must be both lawful and laudable. Upon this subject we are referred to the case of Saul, who received the prophetic spirit, when he met a procession of prophets, playing on their instruments; and who was cured of the evil spirit, when David played upon the harp. Elisha is another instance very similar. When his mind was agitated by the presence of the wicked king of Israel, he sent for a minstrel, whose playing composed and enlivened his spirit, and prepared him to receive the prophetic influence. (See 1 Sam. x. 5, 6; xvi. 23; 2 Kings iii. 14, 15.) In reply, I remark,—

1. These are not examples of the use of instruments in public worship, and, therefore, are not opposed to my main position, that they were never employed in religious assemblies, except as part of the sacrificial service. That may be proper in processions and in private devotion, which would be highly indecorous if introduced into the stated service of the church. David danced before the ark, and, in secret, sometimes

prostrated himself before the Lord ; but for a congregation to do either in the house of God, would have a singular appearance.

2. If instrumental music tends more powerfully than other means to promote a devotional spirit, how will the objector account for the fact, that the Almighty never directed its use either in the synagogue or in the christian church ? Is he unacquainted with one of the best helps to piety ? If not, and if he really intended its use, since he must have foreseen that without clearer intimations of his will, its lawfulness in the service of the synagogue would not be discovered at all, and in the service of the christian church would not be discovered for many centuries, — is it not strange, that neither prophet nor apostle was commissioned to give a plain hint on the subject ? Is it not passing strange, that this powerful auxiliary of godliness should escape the penetration of learned and holy men during the purest ages of the church, and be found out at last by the adherents of popery, at a time when its worst abominations were reigning under the influence of the man of sin ?

3. It is admitted that a few cases may be quoted, in which instrumental music may have been useful in composing and cheering the mind ; but that is not a sufficient reason for introducing it into the service of God. The rich are directed to “give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.” (Prov. xxxi. 6, 7.) Wine is said to make glad the heart of man. (Psalms civ. 15.) Yea, it is said to cheer both God and man. (Judges ix. 13.) But this effect of it is not the reason why it is used in the Lord’s supper ; and I suppose a votary of Bacchus is not to be found who would not be shocked at the thought of taking as much wine in the service of God as would make his heart merry. A pipe of tobacco and a pinch of snuff will, in many cases, allay irritation, and produce agreeable sensations ; but I never heard this assigned as a

reason why we should introduce smoking and snuffing into our religious exercises.*

Here we may close the discussion as far as it relates to the scriptures. Since, however, the advocates for instruments lay the chief stress upon their adaptation to engage the affections in worship, this argument must be considered a little more at large.

If the ground of utility be taken, the worship of God will be regulated by the whims of men. For when the legality of a ceremony is made to depend upon its beneficial influence on the worshippers, and not upon its having the sanction of the word of God, they must be the judges of its effect, and, of course, must determine the question whether it may be used; and as they generally speak of being pleased and profited with their own inventions, how can it be proved that their worship is unlawful? Upon this principle all the apish tricks and mummeries of popery may be justified.

But how does instrumental music operate so favourably in worship? Considered simply in itself, it can merely gratify the sense of hearing by its pleasing sounds. It produces animal excitement and nothing more. Hence it yields as much pleasure to some brutes as to men, and to the impious as to saints; but it can inspire no more of devotional feeling or sentiment in human beings than in inferior animals, or in the righteous than in the wicked.

With the soul enlivening tones of the organ, a religious person, it is said, associates devotional language, by which his enraptured soul is drawn into the presence of God, whom he gratefully adores. In reply, I observe,—

According to this account, instruments do not directly produce any good; they only excite, and vocal music gives the spiritual direction to the feel-

* These remarks are so extravagant and uncalled for, that we are persuaded if ever Mr. Isaac had been called upon to give another edition of this pamphlet to the public, he would have expunged them.—EDIT.

ings. Some, in their zeal for instruments, seem to forget that there is such a thing as vocal music. The question is not, whether we are to have instrumental music, or none at all? but, of the two kinds, which is best adapted to the house of God? and whether the ends of worship may not be better secured by the exclusion of one than by the union of both?

Music, to be of any use in worship, must do two things. 1. Rouse the affections. 2. Direct them to God. Instruments, at most, can only do the first; but singing, with the spirit and the understanding, will accomplish both. Vocal music, therefore, must be most suitable in the churches of Christ.

In considering the other question, we have to inquire whether instruments, as accompaniments of the human voice, may not be useful. Many good judges have been of opinion that in moving the feelings they cannot exceed good singing. It is unfair in this comparison to contrast, as some do, a poor voice badly managed, with a valuable instrument in the hands of an accomplished master; the one disgusts, and the other delights. There are bad instruments, and bad performers, as well as bad voices and bad singers; and there is, I believe, a pretty equal proportion of defect on both sides. But did the varied and harmonious tones of the best organ, ever inspire the rapturous delight which has been excited by the enchanting warblings of a Catalani? Instruments then are not necessary to raise the feelings; and as this is the only effect they can produce, they are not necessary in worship at all. Even their bigoted advocates are obliged to admit, that they are of no use in the house of God without the human voice; but the human voice can praise God without them, and, as we have seen, as well without them as with them; as helps to devotion, therefore, they are perfectly useless.*

They are worse than useless. The religious ten-

* This is a sweeping conclusion, and one that nothing which Mr. Isaac has yet said in this essay will support.—EDIT.

dency given to excited feelings is effected by the words which accompany the tune. The noise of instruments, however, tends to drown the words and to draw the attention from the hymn, or psalm, to mere sounds, in which the spirit of devotion is lost. In vocal music the words and tune are united, and mutually assist each other; so that it requires a less effort of faith to commune with God in this way than in the other.

Admitting, however, that instruments may exceed the power of the voice in raising the affections, it does not follow that they are useful in worship. For devotional purposes, there may be too much as well as too little of animal excitement. The mind is naturally disposed to rest in that which gives it pleasure; and it will never voluntarily abandon an object in which it finds much delight, for one from which it expects but little. It follows from this principle of our nature, that when the animal gratification arising from the charms of music exceeds the spiritual enjoyment expected from communion with God, the soul will rest satisfied with the pleasures of sense, and make no efforts to turn the attention from the orchestra to the throne of grace. Some excitement of the affections is useful as a preparation for pious exercises; but if they be very deeply and pleasingly interested in objects of sense, as music, painting, etc., there is great danger that they will proceed no further, and that the offices of devotion will be neglected. A traveller needs refreshments on the road, to enable him to perform his journey; but if he be entertained in the way with a paradise of delights, he will be tempted to stop short, and to make that his permanent abode which was only intended for a temporary accommodation.*

It is on this account that church music should be plain, grave, and solemn, adapted to the sacredness of God's service, and to the pious language to which it is set; for though a figured and theatrical style, and

* As far as there is truth in this remark, it is an argument against the excess of pleasure from vocal, as well as instrumental music.—EDIT.

the singing of anthems, and light airy difficult pieces, may be more agreeable to vain minds; yet as far as edification is concerned, (and that ought to be everything in the house of God,) the simple melody produced by congregational singing cannot be improved by any artificial helps.

If there be no danger of too much animal excitement, should the other senses be neglected? why may not the eye be courted as well as the ear? The affections may be quite as much moved by looking on a picture or a statue, as by listening to the sweetest airs; and they may be as powerfully turned to God by the sacred character of the subject of the pencil and chisel, as by the sacred language associated with musical sounds. The advocates for instruments, therefore, to be consistent, ought to set up in their churches and chapels the images of Christ and the saints, and to kneel before them very reverently, and to look at them very steadily, till their hearts melt with pious emotion. A papist will view a crucifix, or a virgin with an infant Jesus in her arms, with as much holy rapture, as a protestant can feel while listening to the sound of the organ.

But while in the house of God the ear and the eye are to be pleased with good things, is the nose to be sent empty away? Will not odoriferous scents produce as delightful sensations as either music, painting, or sculpture? and is it not as easy to give a devotional direction to the feelings in one case as in the other? Ought we not then to follow the papists a little further, and try the efficacy of incense?

The Corinthians hit on a device to gratify the sense of taste in their religious assemblies, by taking together a social meal. And certainly some people can enjoy a good supper to the full as much as others can a concert; and as the liveliness of the spirits is pretty equal in both cases, I do not see but one may do just as well as the other to assist us in our approaches to God. The apostle, however, thought that the church was not exactly the place in which this sense should be indulged, and therefore asked them if they had not houses

to eat and to drink in ? and if they could not eat their own suppers at home ? (1 Cor. xi.)

The Adamites were of opinion that the sense of feeling might be turned to a spiritual account in the Lord's service ; and under this pretence they practised abominations which were never exceeded by the most shocking rites of heathenism. When we leave the plain word of God, and follow our own vain contrivances, there are no excesses into which we may not run.

If we inquire into the facts of the case, we shall find that they will corroborate the above reasonings, and show that those who have been most addicted to music have been least disposed to piety. Jubal, of the race of cursed Cain, was the inventor of musical instruments. "He was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." (Gen. iv. 21.) When Job gives a description of the wicked, he says, "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance; they take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ." Instead of all this music producing a devotional spirit, it had the directly contrary effect; for he goes on to observe: "Therefore they say unto God, depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" (Job xxi. 11 — 15.) The prophet Jeremiah speaks of music as drawing the heart from God, and provoking him to send the Jews into captivity. "The harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands. Therefore my people are gone into captivity." (Jer. v. 12, 13; see also Amos vi. 5 — 7.)

There were not only no instruments employed by the primitive christians in their worship, but by an express law, as quoted by Peirce,* they would not admit a musical performer into their communion. In

* Peirce's Vindicat. of the Dissent., p. 394.

the Apostolical Constitutions it is said, "If any come to the mystery of godliness, being a player upon a pipe, a lute, or an harp; let him leave it of, or be rejected."* Numerous testimonies are produced from the writings of the fathers by Peirce, and by the presbytery of Glasgow, in their statement relative to the use of an organ, etc., to which I refer the reader, in proof that in the primitive church no instruments were used; and that, in the opinion of the writers, they were only permitted to the Jews in the service of the temple on account of the hardness of their hearts, or as playthings for children, which were to be abandoned at the period of manhood.† When, however, they were introduced into the church, they were associated with a theatrical style of singing, of which both papists and protestants have loudly complained.

Polydore Virgil says, "Now our singers make such a noise in our churches, that nothing can be heard besides the sound of the voice; and they who come there, (that is, all that are in the city,) are satisfied with the concert of music, which their ears itch for, and never mind the sense of the words. So that we are come to that pass, that in the opinion of the common people, the whole affair of religious worship is lodged in these singers; although, generally speaking, there is no sort of men more loose or wicked. And yet a good part of the people run to a church, as to a theatre, to hear them bawl. They hire and encourage them, and look upon them alone as ornaments to the house of God. Wherefore, without doubt, it would be for the interest of religion, either to cast these jackdaws out of the churches, or else to teach them when they sing, they should do it rather in the manner of reading than bawling, as Augustine says Athanasius ordered."‡

Erasmus is, if possible, still more severe: "Let a man," he remarks, "be more covetous than Crassus,

* Lib. viii., c. 32.

† Where is it so written in the book of God?—EDIT.

‡ De rer. invent., lib. vi., c. 2., p. 379.

more foul mouthed than Zoilus, he shall be reckoned a pious man, if he sings those prayers well, though he understands nothing of them. But what, I beseech you, must they think of Christ, who can believe he is delighted with such a noise of men's voices? Not content with this, we have brought into our churches a certain operose and theatrical music; such a confused disorderly chattering of some words, as I hardly think was ever heard in any of the Grecian or Roman theatres. The church rings with the noise of trumpets, pipes, and dulcimers; and human voices strive to bear their part with them." "Men run to church, as to a theatre, to have their ears tickled. And for this end organ makers are hired with great salaries, and a company of boys, who waste all their time in learning these whining tones. Pray now compute how many poor people in great extremity might be maintained by the salaries of these singers."*

The sense of our reformers on this subject may be gathered from the homilies. "God's vengeance," say they, "hath been, and is daily, provoked, because much wicked people pass nothing to resort to the church, either for that they are so sore blinded that they understand nothing of God and godliness, and care not with devilish example to offend their neighbours, or else for that they see the church altogether scoured of such gay gazing sights, as their gross phantasie was greatly delighted with; because they see the false religion abandoned, and the true restored, which seemeth an unsavory thing to their unsavory taste; as may appear by this, that a woman said to her neighbour, Alas! gossip, what shall we now do at church, since all the saints are taken away, since all the goodly sights we were wont to have are gone, since we cannot hear the like piping, singing, chanting, and playing upon the organs, that we could before. But, dearly beloved, we ought greatly to rejoice and give God thanks, that our churches are delivered out of all

* In 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

those things which displeased God so sore, and filthily defiled his holy house and his place of prayer, for the which he hath justly destroyed many nations."*

That Luther was fond of music is pretty generally known, and he has often been referred to triumphantly by the abettors of instrumental music in churches, as decidedly on their side of this question. Greatly as he was attached to music, however, he did not approve of the use of instruments in divine offices; for Hickman remarks, "They are laid aside by most of the reformed churches: nor would they be retained among the Lutherans, unless they had forsaken their own Luther; who, by the confession of Eckhard, reckoned organs among the ensigns of Baal."†

Here we may notice the injustice of representing those who are opposed to instruments in the house of God, as enemies to music. A man may be enthusiastically attached to it, and yet when the performers are numerous, he may prefer singing to playing. Or he may be more excited by instrumental than vocal music, and yet prefer the latter in a place of worship; because he may be of opinion that the human voice is better adapted to the great end of worship, which is, to please the Lord, rather than himself. The mere enlivening of the spirits when depressed by labour or study, is admitted by all to be lawful; and this end may be more easily attained by the use of an instrument than by singing; because, 1. Singing is an exhausting exercise. 2. The person may have an indifferent voice. 3. He may be better pleased in listening to an instrument than to his own voice, even if it be a good one. Without enlarging further, these reasons are sufficient to show that he who scruples the use of instruments in the house of the Lord, may deem them lawful in his own house; and may have as fine a musical taste, and as exquisite a relish of musical per-

* Hom. of the place and time of Prayer, part ii., p. 209.

† Apol., p. 139.

formances, as those who would intrude them into christian worship.

In his homily on 1 Samuel, xviii. 1—9, Calvin says, "Instrumental music, we maintain, was only tolerated on account of the times and of the people, because they were as boys, as the sacred scripture speaketh, whose condition required these puerile rudiments. But in gospel times, we must not have recourse to these, unless we wish to destroy the evangelical perfection, and to obscure the meridian light which we enjoy in Christ our Lord." Knox and his coadjutors removed the organs from the churches of Scotland. Thus it appears that all the principal reformers, both at home and abroad, were opposed to organs and all instruments in the christian service, as tending to corrupt its simplicity and purity.

And when were instruments brought into the church? Bingham, in his *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, has given us a summary of the argument, and concludes that their introduction cannot be dated higher than the twelfth century. And as he was a minister of the church of England, in which instruments are used, and always seems glad when he can produce the sanction of antiquity for the usages of his own church; and as no one can doubt his thorough acquaintance both with the opinions and the practices of the ancients; he cannot be suspected of having fixed the date too late. His judgment is as follows:—

"I should here have put an end to this chapter, but that some readers would be apt to reckon it an omission, that I have taken no notice of organs and bells among the utensils of the church. But the true reason is, that there were no such things in use in the ancient churches, for many ages. Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music not so: for it is now generally agreed by learned men, that the use of organs came into the church since the time of Thomas Aquinas, An. 1250. For he in his *Summs* has these words: 'Our church does not use musical

instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize.' From which our learned Mr. Gregory, in a peculiar dissertation that he has upon this subject, concludes, that there was no ecclesiastical use of organs in his time. And the same inference is made by Cajetan, and Navarre, among the Romish writers. Mr. Wharton also has observed, that Marinus Sanutus, who lived about the year 1290, was the first that brought the use of wind organs into churches; whence he was surnamed Torcellus, which is the name for an organ in the Italian tongue. And about this time Durandus, in his *Rationale*, takes notice of them as received in the church; and he is the first author, Mr. Gregory thinks, that so takes notice of them. The use of the instrument, indeed, is much ancients, but not in church service; the not attending to which distinction is the thing that imposes upon many writers. In the east the instrument was always in use in the emperor's courts, perhaps from the time of Julian, who has an epigram, giving a handsome description of it. But in the western parts the instrument was not so much as known till the eighth century. For the first organ that was ever seen in France, was one sent as a present to King Pepin, by Constantinus Copronymus, the Greek emperor, An. 766, as Bona himself shows out of Sigebert, and the ancient annals of France; and Mr. Gregory adds Marianus Scotus, Martin Polonus, Aventine, Platina, and the Pontifical for the same opinion. But now it was only used in princes' courts, and not yet brought into churches. Nor was it ever received into the Greek churches, there being no mention of an organ in all their liturgies, ancient or modern, if Mr. Gregory's judgment may be taken. But Durandus, however, contends for their antiquity both in the Greek and western churches, and offers to prove it, but with ill success. First, from Julianus Halicarnassensis, a Greek writer, An. 510, whom he makes to say, 'that organs were used in the church in his time.' But he mistakes the sense of the author,

who speaks not of his own times, but of the times of Job and the Jewish temple. For commenting upon those words of Job xxx. 31, 'My harp is turned into mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep,' he says, 'There was no prohibition to use musical instruments, or organs, if it was done with piety, because they were used in the temple.' By which it is plain he speaks of the Jewish temple in the singular, and not of christian temples or churches in the plural, as Durandus mistakes him. Next for the Latin church he urges the common opinion, which ascribes the invention of them to pope Vitalian., An. 660. But his authorities for this are no better than Platina and the Pontifical, which are little to be regarded against clear evidences to the contrary. That which some urge out of Clemens Alexandrinus, I shall not answer as Suicerus does, (who, with Hospinian, and some others, wholly decrying the use of instrumental music in christian churches, says, 'It is an interpolation and corruption of that ancient author,') but only observe that he speaks not of what was then in use in christian churches, but of what might lawfully be used by any private christians, if they were disposed to use it. Which rather argues, that instrumental music, the lute and harp, of which he speaks, was not in use in the public churches. The same may be gathered from the words of St. Chrysostom, who says, 'It was only permitted to the Jews as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls; God condescending to their weakness, because they were lately drawn off from idols. But now instead of organs we may use our own bodies to praise him withal.' Theodoret has many the like expressions, in his comments upon the Psalms, and other places. But the author under the name of Justin Martyr, is more express in his determination, as to matter of fact, telling us plainly, 'That the use of singing with instrumental music was not received in the christian churches, as it was among the Jews in their infant state, but only the use of plain song.' So that there being no use of organs till the

twelfth century, I could not speak of them as utensils of the ancient churches."*

The testimonials of Thomas Aquinas and Cajetan, referred to by Bingham, are given by Peirce,† as follows: Aquinas says, "In the old law God was praised both with musical instruments and human voices, according to that Psalm, xxxiii., 'Praise the Lord with harp, sing unto him with the psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings. But the church does not use musical instruments to praise God, lest she should seem to Judaize. Pipes are not to be used for teaching, nor any artificial instruments, as the harp, or the like; but whatever will make the hearers good men. For these musical instruments rather delight the mind than form it to any good disposition. But under the Old Testament such instruments were used, partly because the people were harder and more carnal; upon which account they were to be stirred up by these instruments, as likewise by earthly promises; and partly because these bodily instruments were typical of something." Upon which place cardinal Cajetan gives us this comment, "It is to be observed, the church did not use organs in Thomas's time. Whence, even to this day, the church of Rome does not use them in the pope's presence. And truly it will appear, that musical instruments are not to be suffered in the ecclesiastical offices we meet together to perform, for the sake of receiving internal instruction from God; and so much the rather are they to be excluded, because God's internal discipline exceeds all human disciplines, which rejected these kind of instruments."‡

Aquinas flourished about the middle of the thirteenth century; and, according to both him and Cajetan, instrumental music was not then practised in the church. They, especially Aquinas, could not be mistaken as to the fact. So that nearly thirteen hundred years elapsed before the sound of a fiddle, a trumpet,

* Bingham's *Antiquities*, b. viii. ch. 7, sec. 14.

† *Vindicat.*, p. 395.

‡ *Aquin.* 2. 2. quest. xci., art. 2.—Cajetan. in *Loc. Aquin.*

or an organ, was heard in a christian assembly. Their late introduction is assigned by the cardinal as the reason why they are not used in the presence of the pope. Prior to the reformation, they were used only in popish churches; and we have seen that the modest old gentleman at Rome was ashamed of them. The Russian church, which is a branch of the Greek, as well as the whole Greek church, and the Armenian, and all the eastern churches, have always, I believe, been without them. Most protestants are of opinion that the church of Rome is anti-christian. And if that ever was her character, it was so in the thirteenth century, and down to the time of the reformation. For nearly thirteen hundred years, then, these instruments were never heard in a church of any kind; the churches which first received them were anti-christian; and for more than fifteen hundred years they were never heard in a church of Christ. The pope, who winked at their introduction by his minions, blushes, and dares not hear them himself; popish writers have borne an honest testimony against them, and the abominations connected with them; all the principal reformers, both at home and abroad, have protested against them as a gross abuse of christian worship; and let him who has more assurance than the old whore of Babylon, plead for these ensigns of Baal, as Luther called them, and put the best face he can upon the worst cause in the world.*

The Methodist preachers have repeatedly borne their testimony against a theatrical style of singing, and against the use of instruments. I cannot learn that any instruments were employed in our chapels, in Mr. Wesley's days; and certainly what he has said upon the subject of church music can never be reconciled with the use of either the organ or the bass viol; and these are the only instruments at present tolerated by the Methodist Conference. In his *Thoughts on the Power of Music*, he lays all the stress on simple

* Surely this language is intemperate.—EDIT.

melody, and reprobates, in the strongest terms, the attention paid by the moderns to counterpoint and harmony. "The ancient composers," says he, "studied melody alone—the due arrangement of single notes—and it was by melody alone, that they wrought such wonderful effects. Ever since harmony was introduced, ever since counterpoint has been invented, as it has altered the grand design of music, so it has well nigh destroyed its effects." Now no one plays either the bass or the organ in the single notes of the tune alone, without any regard to harmony.

Warmly as Mr. Wesley was attached to the church of England, he disapproved of her music. "And to complete the matter," he remarks in his Thoughts, "This astonishing jargon has found a place even in the worship of God! It runs through (O pity! O shame!) the greatest part, even of our church music! It is found even in the finest of our anthems, and in the most solemn parts of our public worship! Let any impartial, any unprejudiced person say, whether there can be a more direct mockery of God!" On one occasion, when he had been preaching in a church, he observes, "I was greatly disgusted at the manner of singing: 1. Twelve or fourteen persons kept it to themselves; and quite shut out the congregation. 2. These repeated the same words, contrary to all sense and reason, six, eight, or ten times over. 3. According to the shocking custom of modern music, different persons sung different words at one and the same moment: an intolerable insult on common sense, and utterly incompatible with any devotion."*

Mr. Wesley was charmed with the simple melody of his followers, before the spirit of the world had in some degree corrupted the purity of their worship; and was delighted to find that the taste and practice of the ancients corresponded with his own. "I was much surprised in reading an Essay on Music, written by one who was a thorough master of the subject; to

* Wesley's Works, vol. iv., p. 375.

find that the music of the ancients was as simple as that of the Methodists; that their music wholly consisted of melody, or the arrangement of single notes; that what is now called harmony, singing in parts, the whole of counterpoint and fugues, is quite novel, being never known in the world, till the popedom of Leo the tenth. He farther observes, that as the singing different words by different persons at the very same time, necessarily prevents attention to the sense, so it frequently destroys melody for the sake of harmony; meantime it destroys the very end of music, which is to affect the passions.”*

The opinions of the preachers, generally, upon the subject, may be gathered from the following Minutes of Conference:—

“If a preacher cannot sing himself, let him choose two or three persons in every place, to pitch the tune for him.” (Min. 1744.)

“Beware of formality in singing, or it will creep in upon us unawares. Is it not creeping in already, by those complex tunes, which it is scarce possible to sing with devotion? Such is, ‘Praise the Lord, ye blessed ones!’ Such the long quavering hallelujah, annexed to the morning song tune, which I defy any man living to sing devoutly. The repeating the same words so often, (but especially while another repeats different words, the horrid abuse which runs through the modern church music,) as it shocks all common sense, so it necessarily brings in dead formality, and has no more of religion in it than a Lancashire horn-pipe.” (Min. 1768.)

“Q. Can anything be done to prevent what appears to us a great evil: namely, bands of music and theatrical singers being brought into our chapels, when charity sermons are to be preached? A. Let none in our connexion preach charity sermons, where such persons and such music are introduced. And let the stewards, trustees, and leaders, be informed, that such

* Wesley's Works, vol. iv., p. 383.

a practice is offensive to the Conference, who believe that it has been hurtful to the minds of many pious people." (Min. 1800.)

"Let no instruments of music be introduced into the singers' seats, except a bass viol, should the principal singer require it." "Let the original, simple, grave, and devotional style be carefully preserved, which, instead of drawing the attention to singing and the singers, is so admirably calculated to draw off the attention from both, and to raise the soul to God only," etc. (Min. 1805.)

"The Conference judge it expedient to refuse, after this present year, their sanction or consent to the erection of any organ in our chapels." (Min. 1808.)

In the Minutes of 1815, singing after the close of the public service is forbidden, because it tends to extinguish the spirit of devotion, and to destroy those serious impressions produced by the ministry of God's word; the rules made in 1805, respecting singing in general, and the restricted use of instruments in particular, are again pressed on our attention; and Mr. Wesley's tract on the Power of Music, is ordered to be reprinted and circulated in every circuit, that the style of music recommended in it, (which is that of simple melody,) may, as much as possible, be restored.

"Q. What is the decision of the Conference on the erection of organs in our chapels? A. We think that in some of the larger chapels, where some instrumental music may be deemed expedient, in order to guide the congregational singing, organs may be allowed, by special consent of the Conference, but every application for such consent shall be first made at the District Meeting; and if it obtain their sanction, it shall be then referred to a committee at the Conference, who shall report their opinion as to the propriety of acceding to the request, and also as to the restrictions with which the permission to erect an organ ought, in that particular case, to be accompanied." (Min. 1820.)

There is no subsequent rule on the subject. The

above extracts contain the most material regulations relating to music in our worship, which have been enacted at different times by the Conference. There are reiterated complaints, which I have not copied, of the encroachments made by sets of singers with their instruments on the primitive mode which obtained in our connexion, which show how averse the Conference have been to any departure from the practice of our fathers, and that the few concessions they have been prevailed upon to make, have been extorted from them. On the above rules I must make a few observations : —

1. Only two instruments are tolerated by the Conference in our public worship ; the bass viol, and the organ.

2. Conference cannot consider the Jewish precedent as of any authority under the gospel ; because (1.) The Jews were not restricted to two instruments. (2.) The two we use had no place in their worship ; for they had no bass instrument at all resembling our viol, and if they used their organ in the temple, it was not like ours. (3.) Those who urge the Jewish precedent refer to such passages as the following : “ Praise him with the sound of the trumpet : praise him with the psaltery and harp,” etc. (Psalm cl.) This language is preceptive ; and if it apply to gospel times, makes the use of instruments a duty ; a light in which the subject is never viewed by the Conference. Besides, the text not only enjoins the use of instruments, but specifies the particular instruments which are to be used ; as the trumpet, psaltery, harp, etc. Now it is remarkable that these are all proscribed by the Conference.

3. Mr. Wesley and the Conference have expressed themselves as strongly against counterpoint and harmony in worship, as I have done ; and I wish any member of our body, who is an advocate for instruments, would show me of what possible use either a bass viol or an organ could be in our assemblies, if it were permitted to sound no other than the “ single notes ” of which the air of the tune is composed.

4. Some people consider an instrument as suitable a medium of praise as the human voice, or more so. Our laws give no countenance to such an opinion. They do not require you, when a new chapel is erected, to petition both the District Meeting and the Conference, for leave to sing hymns to the Lord.

5. For twelve years, from 1808 to 1820, organs were under an interdict; and when it was taken off, the most cautious language was used. "In some of the larger chapels, where some instrumental music may be deemed expedient, organs may be allowed, by special consent of the Conference." Now this is granting that in all the smaller chapels, and in some of the larger, there is no case of expediency to warrant the introduction of this "divine box of sounds." And, as though the Conference were quite sensible that in admitting an organ there is great danger of a serious evil accompanying it, they use as many precautions as are employed at our ports to prevent the introduction of the plague. The petitioners must stop and do quarantine at a District Meeting, and must proceed from thence, with a bill of health, to Conference; then a committee is to sit upon their case, who, if they recommend the grant, must fix upon the restrictions with which it is to be accompanied: and after all, they only gain "permission to erect an organ."

The reason alleged why an organ is necessary in some large chapels, is, that a singer cannot always be found whose voice is sufficient to fill the place, and to guide the congregation. But if a singer cannot fill the chapel with his voice for ten minutes, though he have a dozen pauses while the preacher is giving out the words, what is the preacher to do? How is he to make the whole congregation hear a discourse, more than half an hour long, without any breaks in it? If the singer needs an organ, does not the preacher need a trumpet? and if the rage for possessing the largest chapel in the connexion, which at present prevails in many of our principal societies, should continue for a few years longer, I do not see how he will be able to

do without one. We shall then be able to talk about sounding the gospel trumpet, without employing a figure of speech.

If the duty of christian praise were but fully understood, and seriously felt by our congregations, we should hear no more of the want of instruments in our public worship. The passages have been produced which demonstrate that singing is a christian duty. But who feels this to be a duty? Perhaps one in a hundred. Vast numbers do not reach the house of God till the first hymn is finished. In many places a third part of the congregation is not assembled at the commencement of the service. Of those who are present, many are so far from offering to God "the fruit of their lips," while the sacrifice of praise is being offered, that they do not open their mouths at all, except to yawn. And of the rest, how seldom is it the case that you can hear beyond the singers' pew anything more than a hum, which many are too lazy to continue for a line together.

In this state of things, Mr. Wesley's recommendation, to "choose two or three persons in every place to pitch the tune," will avail nothing. When congregational singing is given up, we must have sets of singers, or no singing at all. In our great towns, therefore, when a large new chapel is built, the formation of a set of singers is a very important affair. The leader has a salary attached to his office, and he must make up a band of such materials as he can collect together. The chief qualifications of his associates are, a musical taste, and a good voice; the one is necessary to induce them to join him, and the other to charm the congregation. Piety, in these arrangements, is too often lost sight of; and it is a fact too notorious to be denied, though deeply to be lamented, that many of these singers belong to no christian church, and pay but little regard to christian morals. These gentlemen soon begin to feel their importance. The singing department of divine service is left principally to them; and they must be pleased, or we shall be in danger of

sticking fast in the midst of our devotions. I have known instances when a minister, by rejecting hymns of their dictation, and requiring those of his own choice to be sung, has given such offence to these gentry, that they have refused to sing at all. As their bond of union is the love of music, and not the love of God; and as harmony, and not melody, is the present fashion, they have completely changed the character of our singing; and substituted for the simple, grave, and devotional style of our fathers, the counterpoint, jig, and quaver of the theatre.

It is no wonder that such sets of singers should be desirous of introducing instruments; because the nearer approach they make to a concert, the more the carnal taste is gratified. To excite devotional feeling is not their aim, but merely to please themselves, and to gain the applause of the audience. And when the congregation, generally, do not join heartily in the singing, they feel no more interest in it than as it may be made to minister to their pleasure; and as instruments make more noise, and can generally run through the intricacies of counterpoint more perfectly, than the human voice can do, they easily persuade themselves that "a few instruments would be a great improvement to the singing." Thus the business is soon settled, and the house of God is turned into a playhouse.

I do not wish this description to be applied to all sets of singers, and to all congregations; there are, thank God, many noble exceptions. But whenever light and frothy young people are permitted to crowd into the singers' pew, they soon work a revolution in the musical department. When the leader of the singers has been a pious man, (which is not always the case,) I have known him complain that he could not keep his set together, unless they might perform a piece occasionally, and be indulged with a few instruments. And he must be an entire stranger to our Israel, who has not heard members of the congregation criticise the abilities of the singers, and express the pleasure or disgust they felt at their performance. But I never,

in the whole course of my life, heard a member of a congregation deliver a serious opinion as to how, he himself, had discharged the duty of praise. You may hear people blame themselves for wandering thoughts during prayer, and for being drowsy, or hard-hearted under the preaching: but though you may have noticed hundreds every sabbath day, who never opened their lips in thanksgiving during singing, did you ever hear one of them pronounce judgment upon himself for having, in this particular, neglected an important duty? In what other light can such people consider the singing, than merely as an entertainment, to compensate for the dulness which the other services occasion!

If singing be a duty which we owe to God, why do not all join in it? and join in it with the whole heart? How is it made out that only the singers owe this duty? that the duty only extends to one pew? while all the people in all other parts of the place are quite at liberty to sing or not, as they please? Or may the singers be our proxies, and do this work for us? But if so, ought we not to contract with them to do it? and with God to accept their services in our behalf? Then indeed we might, with some show of reason, take upon us to reprove or applaud our representatives. But I can no more comprehend how another man can pay to God my tribute of praise, than how I can pay his; or how it can be his duty to offer this sacrifice, more than it is mine. It is because the listeners have no sense of the religious duty of singing the praises of Jehovah, that they take no part in the service; and as conscience is out of the question with such people, their praise or censure of the singers can only proceed from the natural feelings excited by the performance.

And indeed we scarcely ever hear a word in reference to the singing, which would lead us to suspect that the honour of God or the profit of the soul were at all concerned in it. The usual language is, "Very excellent singing!—I was delighted with the singing!"

Or else, "What poor singing!—I was quite in misery while they were singing!" God is not honoured by us, but treated with contempt, if we are mute during this part of the service. We may be pleased, and even delighted, while others are blowing and quavering, because the tickling of the ear is a very grateful sensation; but while we are thus enjoying ourselves, we lose sight of the chief design of devotional exercises, which is, to please God. In a word, if it be a religious duty to sing the praises of God in religious assemblies, then all ought to join in it who can; and those who wilfully refrain, offer the grossest insult to the Deity, by presenting themselves before him during this service, and refusing to take any part in it: however much they may be pleased with the performances of others, God cannot but be angry with them. It is not enough to say, as they probably will, that they silently accompany the music with their grateful feelings to the throne of the heavenly grace; for if some may, in silence, discharge the duty of praise to God in his house, may not others also? may not all? If all who have ability are not under an obligation to sing, then none are; and then the singers may be excused as well as the rest. If singing, therefore, be a duty, this silent accompaniment of grateful feelings with the joyful noise made in the orchestra, cannot be pleasing to God; and if vocal music have no place in the institutions of the gospel, then it is will worship, in which it is sinful to join, even mentally. There is no delusion more common, nor perhaps more fatal, than the mistaking those pleasurable sensations excited by music, for devotional feelings. The profligate run in crowds to oratorios. The most sacred and heart-melting words are frequently connected with the music; but they are rendered inaudible by the crash of an hundred instruments; the feelings are overpowered by the harmonious sounds, and God, and the soul, and everything else are lost sight of. All will speak in raptures of the treat they have received; and many will think themselves truly religious and fit for heaven,

because they felt as though heaven were come down to earth during the performance; and yet we never heard of a sinner returning from these festivities transformed into a saint.

The votaries of music will, perhaps, admit, that the whole congregation should unite in the song of praise, except those who cannot sing, or those who, through weakness, ought to be excused. Such persons will plead for sets of singers, and an organ, or a few other instruments, not as substitutes for congregational singing, but merely as helps to it.

Congregational singing needs no such helps. Nothing more than "two or three persons to pitch the tune," and to take the lead, is necessary for those who desire to worship God in spirit and in truth. They can then take a part in the service; and the melody of their united voices, in harmony with spiritual language, will move the affections sufficiently for every purpose of piety which can be answered by music. And as bands of musicians can do no good, and have done incalculable harm, they ought not to be encouraged in the churches of Christ.

"But when the congregation do not heartily join in the singing, if there be no choir, it is distressing to hear the miserable drawl of the few who attempt to raise a tune." Undoubtedly; and that is the feeling which ought to torment them for their neglect of duty. If, instead of abandoning them to their pain and misery till they repent and reform, you provide them with sets of singers and instruments, you charm them into delusion, which will more certainly prove fatal, because it is pleasing.

Some who can find no direct authority in the New Testament for employing a band of musicians in a christian assembly, will attempt a defence of the practice in this way. They say, that as wicked people are generally much pleased with music, many of them will be drawn by it to the house of God; that when they are there, they may receive good to their souls; and that though the feeling which induces them to attend

is not the best, yet since it may issue in something really good, the means may be used for the sake of the end.

I will not deny that some who attend a place of worship from carnal motives may be converted, because God sometimes brings good out of evil; but if the service of God be so constructed by human authority, as designedly to operate upon a corrupt feeling, in the hope that it may issue in a better, this is acting exactly upon the principle of those who say, "Let us do evil, that good may come." And whether the good really come or not, they who do the evil are threatened with damnation for their pains. I need not, I suppose, go into any laboured proof to show that when a person is induced to attend a place of worship merely to gratify the sense of hearing with the sound of music, he is under the influence of a very improper motive; since he ought to be prompted by a sincere desire to worship God. It is a libel on the gracious government of the Redeemer to say that the good may not come, unless the evil be first done. No man is required to put his own soul into peril in order to save others; and I will never believe that a man is influenced by the love of souls, who commits sin with the professed design of bringing them to God. He who does not love sin, would not commit it to save the world. And in the case under consideration, no one who does not delight in music ever dreamed of making a musical band the means of a sinner's conversion. If fifes and drums could work such miracles, every soldier would be a saint. A man who is pleased with such things as these, and wishes to enjoy them in the house of God, will not be very nice as to the evidence by which the indulgence is to be supported. A text out of the New Testament would be very acceptable; but if he cannot have any divine authority, he will be quite satisfied with the argument drawn from utility. Having persuaded himself that they will draw sinners, not indeed to God, but to his house, he concludes that they may be associated with

divine worship. If the good follows, he thinks himself entitled to praise ; and if they remain sinners still, why both he and they have been gratified, and he has a salvo for his conscience in the goodness of his motives.

This business of drawing a congregation has given scope to the ingenuity of churchmen, Methodists, and dissenters. Music has attracted multitudes ; a very fine place has also often invited the attendance of the respectable part of the community ; the doling out of loaves at the church door to poor half-famished females, (the way in which charitable bequests are distributed in some places,) has overcome the indolence or scruples of many, and brought them to the house of prayer ; and if we may trust to the end to sanctify the means, a barrel of ale would perhaps be more successful than any other merely human expedient in drawing a large congregation. The greatest good that ever came to man sprung out of the greatest act of wickedness ever perpetrated by him—the redemption of the world by the death of Christ ; but the glorious result neither justified nor excused those who shed his innocent blood. We must be satisfied that we have a divine warrant to use certain means, before we venture to employ them ; and if this be wanting, however admirably we may think them adapted to promote the end, and whatever good may actually arise from them,—I hear God indignantly demanding of those who have the temerity to adopt them, “ When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts ? ” (Isaiah i. 12.)

It is said, however, that conversion is God’s work, and that he will not accomplish it by means of which he disapproves ; when, therefore, we see that he has co-operated with those employed, we want no other proof of their legality. I will grant this. But how will the objector apply it to the subject in hand ? I suppose thus : “ Music is a means of drawing a person to a place of worship ; when there, he is awakened

and converted : thus the blessing of God crowns the means, and gives them the stamp of his approbation." Ay ; by what means ? Did God awaken and convert him while listening to a fiddle or an organ ? I trow not ; or the man would have stood as good a chance of being converted in a playhouse, as in the house of the Lord. The divine blessing accompanied prayer and preaching, which are both of divine appointment ; and the sinner was changed, not by the music, but in spite of it. Men often use a variety of means in order to a spiritual end, some of which are good and some bad. If the end be effected, they take it for granted that God has blessed them all ; when in truth he has brought good out of the bad means, and given his blessing only to the good ones.

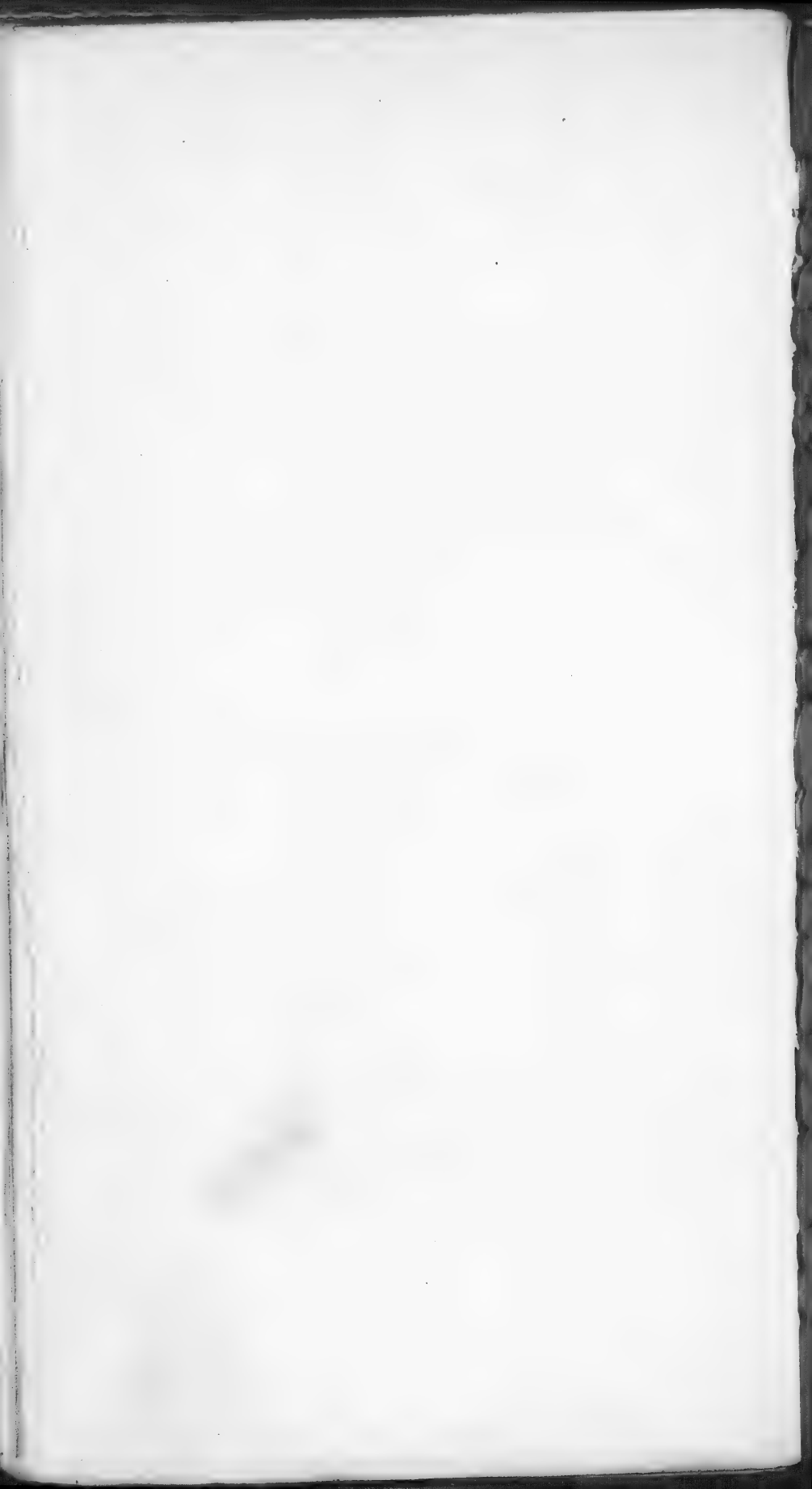
When the wicked are drawn to the house of God to hear the music, they are often stunned with surprise to see some of the vilest characters in the town occupying one of the most conspicuous places in the chapel, and taking the lead in one of the most important parts of worship. As they are drawn by the music, their attention is particularly directed to the singers' pew ; and they often perceive the occupants very busy, while the minister is at prayer, and during a part of the sermon, in talking one to another, and not always in a whisper ; in turning over their tune books, and in adjusting their instruments. Who can resist the power of religion, when she sets before him so impressive and edifying a spectacle ! But seriously ; if the design were to harden people's hearts, and to teach them how to treat sacred things with rudeness and contempt, I do not know that a more effectual method could be taken. And, indeed, in some places, the decent part of the congregation has been so scandalized with the behaviour of these pipers and harpers, that a curtain is provided for the front of their pew, to hide them and their deeds from observation.

Many people have been so enamoured of music as to inquire, with an air of seriousness, whether there will not literally be harps in heaven ? Let the inquirer

reflect for a moment on what the affirmative involves, and I hope he will be satisfied. If harps will be used in heaven, there must be mines to furnish the metal of which the strings are composed, trees to supply the wood to which the strings are attached, miners to get the metal, smiths to prepare it, carpenters to fashion the wood, harp makers to construct and tune the instruments, and a great variety of tools, (how to be obtained I know not,) in order to perform these operations. The human voice will be perfected at the resurrection of the just, and no instrument, of even angelic manufacture, will be able to compete with it.

The great design of worship is to please God; and it by no means follows that he is pleased with me when I am pleased with music. Singing is a divinely instituted part of worship, and tends to excite devout affections; and it is only when these feelings are brought into exercise that our worship is acceptable. When people sing in tunes and words suited to convey grateful sentiments, and with a desire to gain his approbation, God will assist and bless them in their service; and thus the end will be answered. And as singing is the only music authorized by Christ in public worship, it will fulfil the design of its institution when it is performed "with the spirit, and with the understanding also." If people will not use it in the way the Lord hath appointed, he has not empowered them to contrive either helps or substitutes; and if they will have recourse to such things, it must be at their peril. They who never repented of their sins, nor believed with the heart unto righteousness, may "rejoice at the sound of the organ," and be in raptures at the thought of angels entertaining them hereafter in heavenly strains with harps of gold; but the trumpet of God will at last awake them from these reveries, to attend a mournful concert of "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

ESSAY ON PHRENOLOGY.



PREFACE.

DURING the time Mr. Isaac was stationed in the Sheffield circuit, several lectures were delivered by one Dr. Overend, in support of the system of Phrenology. To this system Mr. Isaac was most decidedly opposed, conceiving it to be fraught with error and infidelity : hence he, and his friend the Rev. James Everett, agreed at this time carefully to test it by the principles of reason and revelation. Mr. Everett undertook its examination by the light of scripture, and Mr. Isaac tried it by the dictates of enlightened reason ; and their joint production was offered to the public under the double title of, *The Head Piece, or Phrenology opposed to Divine Revelation ; and, A Helmet for the Head Piece, or Phrenology incompatible with Reason.* It is this well constructed and efficient piece of defensive armour, or this luminous and powerful piece of reasoning against the showy but shallow assumptions of phrenology, that is now presented to the reader.

To this essay are appended four letters on the same subject, published in the *Hull Advertiser*, 1828, in reply to two gentlemen who were inflicting on the Rev. James Bromley, what they considered a merited castigation for some offensive liberties which he had publicly taken with this their favourite science. Two opponents to one, Mr. Isaac looked upon as foul play ; and hence he took the part of his friend, in a letter addressed to these gentlemen, under the signature of *Mentor*. They, as by consent, ceased to worry Mr. Bromley, and eagerly fastened on Mr. Isaac. But they knew not their antagonist, or they had never seized on Daniel Isaac. They soon found that he was far more than a match for them. His arguments and sarcasms they were utterly unable to withstand ; for, lion-like, with nearly a single stroke of his paw, he laid these doughty champions of their cause breathless at his feet.—EDIT.

TO THE READER.

It is granted on all hands, that the imagination is often affected during sleep, by the impressions which certain images, conversations, and transactions have made upon it through the day. There would not, therefore, be anything remarkable in two persons, who had been more than ordinarily engaged on the same subject in their waking moments, dreaming of it in the course of the night. They might not, it is true, dream, so to speak, exactly in the same track; but still, the scenes and the subjects of the day, would either be the phantoms of pleasure or the spectres of fear to the pillowed head. This, in the estimation of some, might account for the authors of the "Head-Piece," and of the "Helmet" dreaming so admirably in concert with each other, just like two musicians humming over different parts of the same tune. The remarks of JAMES THE LESS, at the close of the "Head Piece," supercede the necessity of further prefatory observations from

DANIEL THE SEER.

ESSAY ON PHRENOLOGY.

MR. CERATE, who had introduced Mr. Phrenetic to the house, and to the company of his friend, and who, like every true disciple, was pretty certain of success, turned to Mr. Prober, and said, We have some knowledge of the arguments employed by Mr. Cautey against the science in question; but we understand you oppose it on other than scriptural grounds. Will you favour us with your views? for some of us are led to suppose you would almost as soon wish to be without a head as carry about with you a significant bump.

Mr. Prober. As you desire my opinion on the subject of phrenology, which at present attracts so much of public attention, I cannot refuse to comply with your wishes, but shall endeavour to be as brief as possible.

The principal points for which the abettors of this new science contend, are, that each of the propensities, sentiments, and intellectual qualities of the mind, has a separate pair of organs, consisting of certain portions of brain, by means of which they are manifested: that, in proportion to the size of the organs, the faculties possess the power of manifestation; and that the size of the organs is indicated by bumps on the cranium, correspondent to their extent on the surface of the brain. Thus, by examining a person's skull, you may divine his character.

Here Mr. Phrenetic signified his assent to all but the last sentence.

Mr. Prober. Many have been surprised at the confidence with which phrenologists promulgate their doc-

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ESSAY ON PHRENOLOGY.

MR. CERATE, who had introduced Mr. Phrenetic to the house, and to the company of his friend, and who, like every true disciple, was pretty certain of success, turned to Mr. Prober, and said, We have some knowledge of the arguments employed by Mr. Cautey against the science in question; but we understand you oppose it on other than scriptural grounds. Will you favour us with your views? for some of us are led to suppose you would almost as soon wish to be without a head as carry about with you a significant bump.

Mr. Prober. As you desire my opinion on the subject of phrenology, which at present attracts so much of public attention, I cannot refuse to comply with your wishes, but shall endeavour to be as brief as possible.

The principal points for which the abettors of this new science contend, are, that each of the propensities, sentiments, and intellectual qualities of the mind, has a separate pair of organs, consisting of certain portions of brain, by means of which they are manifested: that, in proportion to the size of the organs, the faculties possess the power of manifestation; and that the size of the organs is indicated by bumps on the cranium, correspondent to their extent on the surface of the brain. Thus, by examining a person's skull, you may divine his character.

Here Mr. Phrenetic signified his assent to all but the last sentence.

Mr. Prober. Many have been surprised at the confidence with which phrenologists promulgate their doc-

trines ; especially, as they confess that the science, as they call it, is new, imperfect, surrounded with difficulties, and has already undergone several changes.

But they profess to be philosophers of Lord Bacon's school, who deduce principles from facts. They have examined many skulls, and have found them to be as various in their structure as their possessors were in character. They have also discovered, that when different persons have been remarkable for the manifestation of a particular faculty, they exhibited a large protuberance on a particular part of the cranium. Upon these facts the principal part of their system is built. The portions of brain under these protuberances are supposed to be the seat of the faculties, and the organs by which they perform their functions. Thus, the phrenological organ of "destructiveness" is said to be conspicuous in the heads of cool and deliberate murderers.

Mr. Cerate. Not anything could be more clearly demonstrated than this subject was last night, by my respected friend, Mr. Phrenetic.

Mr. Prober. Suppose this be granted, it proves nothing, unless it can be shown, on the other side of the question, that none have these bumps, except such as are of a ferocious disposition ; but this will not be pretended. In the Transactions of the Phrenological Society, lately published, there are eight cerebral developments.

The following is the indication of this organ :—

In King Robert Bruce, large ; in Miss Fisher, aged nine years, full ; in J. G., a boy, aged ten years, large ; in the Rev. Mr. M., a baptist minister, large ; in James Gordon, a murderer, very large ; in John Bellingham, a murderer, very large ; in Mary Macinnes, a murderer, large ; in David Haggart, a murderer, full.

This organ is not marked small, or moderate, in any of these examples ; it is of very unequal size in the murderers ; and, if it be larger in two of them than in any of the four who are not chargeable with this crime, it is larger in three of the latter than in David Hag-

gart, one of the former. It is wonderful to find this "organ conspicuous in cool and deliberate murderers," when it appears equally conspicuous in persons who cannot be charged with either murder or cruelty! You may find twenty other parts of the body which exhibit pretty much the same appearances in murderers and others; and you might, with as much propriety, make any one of these the seat of anger, as the part upon which the phrenologists have fixed.

Mr. Anodyne. Other parts of the body are not so immediately connected with the brain.

Mr. Prober. It is just the same with all the other organs as with this. For instance: phrenologists have noticed a large bump on a certain part of the skull, in some pious people—a point not lost sight of by my friend Mr. Cautery; they have, therefore, called this the organ of veneration,—the seat of the religious faculty. I have had the curiosity to examine the indications of this faculty in the four murderers. In Gordon, it is large; in Bellingham, it is moderate; in Macinnes, it is full; and, in Haggart, it is moderate. It is not deficient in any of them; and two of them have more than an average share of religion! But if a certain portion of the skull exhibit the same appearances in both religious and irreligious people, I have just as good a reason for calling it the indication of profaneness, as the phrenologists have for calling it the indication of veneration. If this organ were large in all pious people, and small in all profane people; and if the same distinction existed in reference to all the other phrenological organs which are said to be established; then the subject would deserve a serious investigation; but, as things are, they have not advanced a single step—they have not so much as a probable to support any of their inductions.

Mr. Phrenetic. That they have not advanced a step, has yet to be proved.

Mr. Prober. A most remarkable instance of the failure of their indications is furnished by the Transac-

tions of the Society,* in an article on the Phrenology of Hindostan. The writer says, "The organ of philoprogenitiveness is uniformly very fully developed in the Hindoo. According to my observations, males and females possess it in the same proportion." It gives the love of children. And yet there are no people in the world who practise infanticide to the same extent.

Indeed nothing is more common than for the indications on the cranium to be flatly contradicted in the life. Thus, in both Mary Macinnes and James Gordon, the organ of language is marked full. And in point of fact, the woman had only learned to read and write, both of which she performed very badly; and the man could do neither.

Mr. Anodyne. You ought to know that it is stated by phrenologists in explanation, that when there is no manifestation correspondent to the indications, this is owing to circumstances being unfavourable to the development, or to the restraining influence of other organs.

Mr. Prober. If the fact were first established, that the brain is divided into a plurality of organs, by means of which the faculties perform their functions, then we might admit these explanations, to account for the want of correspondence between the organs and the manifestations; but, till the fact is established, nothing is done, and the phrenologist is only arguing in a circle. He sets out to prove that the propensities, sentiments, and intellectual powers, are indicated on the cranium; and he produces some examples in which the life corresponds with these indications: these are his proofs. But I can produce as many examples to show that the life does not correspond with these appearances on the skull; and I have just as good a reason to infer the agreement in his examples is merely accidental, as he has to infer that the disagreement in mine is such. For instance; I have pro-

duced two examples of dunces having the organ of language full. I will not deny but a phrenologist may produce two examples of learned men having the same organ fully developed. Now, my examples will just as well prove that the part of the cranium referred to is the indication of ignorance, as his, that it is the indication of learning. If I will grant him his point, he can account for my principles being contrary to the rule, by stating that they received no education, or else, that the organ of language was cramped by the controlling power of other organs. And if he will grant me my point, I will get rid of his exceptions by saying that his men went to a good school for a long time, which was enough to make blockheads wise, or else, that several organs favourable to learning, overcame the natural propensity of one to ignorance.

Mr. Cautery. But how does a phrenologist prove the influence of the organs upon one another?

Mr. Prober. Why, it must be so, or the indications would agree with the character.

Mr. Cautery. And why do not the indications agree with the character?

Mr. Prober. Because of the restraining power of the organs. Grant him either, and he will prove the other; but grant him neither, and he has no proof at all. It is thus that these boasted disciples of Bacon philosophize! They agree, as I have already stated, in a circle. They begin by begging the question, and end in hypothesis, in order to make a flimsy system hang together, which has nothing solid to support it.

Admit the influence of circumstances, (and it cannot be denied,) and the science is immediately in uncertainty; for if you cannot prognosticate the circumstances in which a person may be placed, you are perfectly at a loss as to how the organs will act, and may scrutinize his cranium till you crack your own, without being able to come to any conclusion respecting his character.

A short pause ensued, in hope of inducing a re-

ply, when a wish was expressed for Mr. Prober to proceed.

Mr. Prober. Do circumstances rule the organs? or the organs circumstances? If the former, the science is destroyed: if the latter, then phrenologists must refer to something else than circumstances to explain the discrepancies between the organs and manifestations. If it be said, sometimes one rules, and sometimes the other, this throws all into confusion: it is like a civil war raging in a country, in which both parties gain advantages by turns, and thus baffle all calculations as to which will finally triumph. I shall give you some examples by and by, of persons who had large organs, and were placed in circumstances favourable to their full development, and yet the lazy fellows would do nothing at all.

What is said of the restraining influence which one organ exerts upon another, is perfectly gratuitous, and is, as has been shown by Mr. Cautery, inconsistent with sound theology. All that can be said for it is, that the system of phrenology requires it; but I have never seen a particle of evidence in support of it. When we come to the examination of Gordon's cranium, I shall show that this doctrine is false. In the mean time I have two remarks to make. 1. Supposing this doctrine to be true, and that the influence of such organ is in proportion to its size, yet when the influence of circumstances is taken into the account, a phrenologist must be liable to perpetual mistake in his calculations, because he has no indications on the cranium of the circumstances in which his subject may be placed. For instance, if a person have a very large destructiveness, and a large benevolence, a phrenologist would decide that cruelty will predominate in the character; and yet, if he be placed in a situation very favourable to the cultivation of benevolence, and very much opposed to the manifestation of destructiveness, these circumstances may turn the balance the other way, and produce a character highly amiable. 2. It is a strong presumptive argument against the influence

of one organ upon another, that it is as contrary to the analogy of nature, as to the doctrines of the Bible. The organ of sight does not interfere with that of hearing, nor the organ of taste with that of smelling ; nor do we know of any two clashing together, in a healthy state of the body. There is this jumble and strife of organs in the system of the phrenologists only ; it is not to be found in the system of nature.

Mr. Cerate. Give me leave to remind you that another argument in favour of the plurality of organs, and of their phrenological situation and classification, is drawn from an examination of the skulls of animals. It turns out that the structure of the cranium of the different species is as different as their propensities. The most prominent parts indicate the principal propensities ; and it has been observed, that men who have indulged the same propensities freely, have exhibited in the same parts a similarity of structure. Thus the organ of destructiveness, which is so largely developed in murderers, is also large in carnivorous, and comparatively small in graminivorous animals ; and the organ of constructiveness, which is so conspicuous in ingenious mechanics, has been noticed as very prominent in animals which have manifested much art in the construction of anything ; as the beaver, in building its house ; and certain birds, their nests.

Mr. Cautery. Every medical man will inform you, that comparative anatomy, which was much relied on formerly, has led to many serious mistakes ; no great stress, therefore, ought to be laid upon it.

Mr. Prober. Besides, if in carnivorous animals the propensity to destroy were the same as in men, they would kill other animals when incited by neither hunger nor revenge ; but this is not observed to be the case. In the human species this organ is roused to activity, we are told, by the mere love of killing. It is on this principle that phrenologists explain the conduct of children in torturing and destroying insects and small animals. To this principle they refer what are called the sports of the field. And were it not for

the restraining power of the moral sentiments, they affirm that our feet would run as swiftly to shed blood, as they do to witness an execution; since it is supposed to be the same organ which prompts to both.* But we never heard of lions or tigers going a hunting, as men do, for the mere pleasure of the thing. When these animals have gratified their appetite, they retire to their dens, and prowl forth again only when instigated by love or hunger. The desire of food is what impels them to take life. Hunger, however, is not indicated by a bump in the skull, but by a hollow in the stomach; the propensity to destroy is not owing to a full organ in the head, but to the motion and craving of an empty organ in the belly. The sensation in the stomach may not, perhaps, wholly determine the kind of food upon which they subsist; but, if this point be settled by the eye, the smell, and the taste, it must be remembered that these organs are not seated in the brain.

Mr. Cautey rejoined: Graminivorous animals manifest as strong a disposition as the carnivorous do, to destroy their own species. Put two bulls, which are strangers to each other, into a field with cows, and they will commonly fight till one is killed. The same remark applies to horses, and many other species of animals. From these facts we have as much right to infer, that the organ marked destructiveness in murderers should be small, because it is found diminutive in one class of animals, which destroy their own species occasionally, as that it should be large, because it is thus exhibited in another class, which indulge the same propensity to the same extent. But I ought to ask pardon for interrupting my friend.

Mr. Prober. No offence, sir. When hunger is not the exciting cause, a lion does not manifest a stronger propensity than a bull does, to destroy other species of animals; for we as seldom hear of one as of the other killing a beast and leaving it whole. What, therefore, the carnivorous destroy more than the grami-

* Phrenol. Trans.

nivorous do, is owing to an exciting cause in the stomach, and not in the head. It follows, on the principles of phrenology, that the organ of destructiveness should be of the same dimensions in both species; and since this is admitted to be contrary to fact, the science is built on fable.

It is merely owing to circumstances that all men do not manifest a disposition to destroy. Let the structure of the cranium be what it may, if we were in a savage state, we should all be under the necessity of doing as other savages do; we must kill to satisfy hunger, or perish through want. In the present state of society in this country, one does the work of destructiveness for many; but in another state, every one would soon learn to perform this necessary operation for himself.

Very few carnivorous animals would give themselves the trouble, and expose themselves to the danger of destroying other creatures, if they could have a plentiful supply brought daily to their dens. I have been informed by a traveller into the east, that lions and tigers will not attack men when not impelled by hunger. As man, therefore, is carnivorous, for the same reasons that the organ of destructiveness is large in all animals of that class, it ought to be large in all the human species; but phrenologists admit this is not the case.

Mr. Cautery. Thank you, sir. If you can overturn the argument drawn from analogy, the whole system will totter. Have the goodness to follow up your attack, by a stroke of the organ of constructiveness in animals; and if you can destroy it as cleverly as you have just dispatched the organ of destructiveness, phrenologists must try to re-construct their system, without employing either the brains or skulls of beasts, which I believe will be a matter of some difficulty.

Mr. Cerate. You are always ready to meet every limping argument more than half way; and what has only the appearance of probability, comes to your pre-

judiced mind with all the force of mathematical demonstration. I suspect he will find that part of the skull too hard to yield to his blows.

Mr. Prober. There is a greater display of intellectual power in the productions of animals, than in those of the human species. What weaver could manufacture a web equal to that of a spider, in the firmness of the thread, and the exquisite mechanism of the structure? or who, however ingenious, could make a nest that would bear a comparison with the work of many a bird? Are animals, then, really more intelligent than men?

Mr. Phrenetic. No. Man constructs by reason, animals by instinct.

Mr. Anodyne. And what is instinct?

Mr. Prober. Lord Monboddo's definition will not, perhaps, be objected to. He says, "Instinct is a determination given by almighty wisdom to the mind of the brute, to act in such or such a way, upon such or such an occasion, without intelligence, without knowledge of good or ill, and without knowing for what end or purpose he acts." Dr. Gleig's definition is much the same. "Instinct," says he, "is a certain power or disposition of mind, by which, independent of all instruction or experience, without deliberation, and without having any end in view, animals are unerringly directed to do spontaneously whatever is necessary for the preservation of the individual, or the continuation of the kind." Animals, then, do not contrive; they merely execute. Neither a bird nor a bee understand anything of the mathematical principles upon which they construct their houses; they do not, by previous study, form plans of their structures, and propose the ends to be served by them; they work under the direction of a superior intellect. It necessarily follows, that the faculty of constructiveness is in that superior intellect; and if this faculty be not in the mind of the brute, then, on the principles of phrenology, as well as those of common sense, the organ of constructiveness is not to be found in its brain,

Mr. Cerate was about to strike in a remark, but was prevented with, "Hear him out."

Mr. Prober. This point may be illustrated by a reference to the labouring classes of our species. If you contemplate a magnificent palace, you will admire the genius of the man who conceived the design, and superintended the erection; but you will not suppose that the workmen employed at it possessed the same skill as the architect, merely because they were the instruments by which the materials were procured, prepared, and united together. They might be block-heads, and yet, under his direction, execute a work which is the wonder of the world. It is not in their heads, but in his, that you must seek for the organ of constructiveness; since many of these mighty builders, if left to themselves, could not have constructed a pig-stye. No one supposes that every mason's clerk that carried stone and mortar to St. Paul's, possessed the faculty of constructiveness in an equal degree with Sir Christopher Wren.

Mr. Phrenetic. Some of our philosophers you know, suppose that brutes can reason, and that the constructive faculty is inherent in their minds.

Mr. Prober. It is not necessary to my argument to maintain that animals are entirely destitute of reason, no more than that those men are without this faculty, who work by the plans of a master genius. If they possess a small portion of reason, they may use it as human labourers do theirs; not in planning the structure, or determining the materials to be used, or how they shall be fitted together; but doing the work assigned them in the way most easy and agreeable to themselves.

Mr. Cautey, afraid of some concession, observed: but I deny that animals contrive those works which manifest superior skill; for, if each animal worked under the direction of its own reason, as that reason is finite, the work would bear the stamp of imperfection, would admit of progressive improvement, and would sometimes be performed at seasons, or under circumstances, which would render it of little or no utility;

all of which is contrary to fact. The productions seem to be perfectly adapted to answer the ends for which they were designed. The greatest philosopher cannot suggest an improvement in them; and there is no proof that from the beginning any improvement has actually been made. The oldest men living will tell you that birds made their nests exactly in the same manner when they were boys, as at present; and the first essay of each individual is as complete as the last. Men often construct works of great ingenuity, but of little or no utility. Animals are never guilty of this folly; their works of art are all useful, and are performed only at the proper season. This perfection in their productions demonstrates that they are under the guidance of infinite wisdom.

Mr. Phrenetic. The organ may be the sign of an innate propensity, though not of a contriving faculty.

Mr. Prober. If so, then the contriving faculty must have another organ. But this will hardly comport with the assertion of phrenologists, that the organ of constructiveness is observed to be large in ingenious mechanics; for if the faculty of it does not include ability and disposition to contrive, as well as a propensity to work, the dimensions of the organ need be no larger, in an ingenious mechanic than in a clod-beater.

But the propensity is not innate; if it were, it would manifest itself as much at one season of the year as another; for the strength of the propensity is measured by the size of the bump; and, as this is the same all the year round, the principles of phrenology require that birds should be as busily employed in building during summer, autumn, and winter, as in the spring.

Having shown that the contrivance of the structure, and the impulse to raise it, are of God, it not only follows that neither the faculty nor the organ of constructiveness is in the skull of the animal, which overturns the argument drawn from analogy,—but further, that God can as easily, by supernatural communication, prompt men as brutes to a course of action which they would

never pursue if left to themselves ; and this cuts up the whole system of phrenology, root and branch. The divine power in the heart of the christian is an abiding principle, which acts in unison with moral liberty, and is directed to moral and spiritual ends ; and this sufficiently distinguishes it from the kind of influence exerted upon animals. But supernatural agency is inconsistent with phrenology ; and having proved its existence in the case of brutes, its possibility in reference to man cannot be denied. I need not, however, pursue this subject farther, as my friend Mr. Cautey has done ample justice to the argument drawn from revelation.

Mr. Lancet, who was one of the party, and who had sat hitherto in silence, said, I wish all the phrenologists in the world had been present, to see how easily their Babel is brought to the ground. I wonder I never thought of these arguments. I confess I used to feel puzzled when phrenologists referred with so much confidence to the skulls of beasts, in support of their doctrine ; but as I do not like to be compared to a beast, I would never yield to the argument, and I feel much obliged to Mr. Prober for completely overturning it. What has the system now to rest on ?

Mr. Phrenetic. Facts, sir, which it will require all the strength of your prejudice to resist. I believe most of the enemies of the science are of your stamp ; they do not like our arguments, and therefore, though they cannot reply to them, they will not yield to them.

Mr. Lancet. I have read a little on the subject of phrenology, but have not studied it. Many of the arguments in favour of it seem very plausible, and I have sometimes been more than half inclined to believe in it ; but I must own I think it derives more support from metaphysics than facts. For instance,—is the brain divided into upwards of thirty pair of organs ? No anatomist pretends that he has discovered so many separate portions of it ; and though a phrenologist says there may be so many different parts in the brain, yet

a may be is not *a fact*. The arguments, however, are ingenious, and I shall be much pleased to hear them temperately discussed.

Mr. Phrenetic. The generally received opinion, that the brain is a single organ, cannot be reconciled with some plain facts.

"It is known that study long continued upon the same subject produces fatigue, and it is then fruitless to urge the mind further on in the same direction; but change the subject, and the understanding resumes its vigour. But if all the moral and intellectual acts depended upon one organ for their execution, a new subject of meditation would serve as an augmentation of fatigue, instead of being in the place of refreshment and repose."*

Change the subject, and you will feel refreshed.

Mr. Cautey. Very true. But you may change the subject, and be relieved of the fatigue, without exerting another faculty; and, therefore, according to phrenology, without employing another organ. Suppose that you have been employing the organ of imitation in painting, till you feel weary; change the subject, and you will feel as much relieved by using the same organ in mimicking a miser, as you would in using the organ of tune at the piano. Or, if the organ of language be fatigued by studying Greek, you will be refreshed by turning to the French. If the hands have been stretched upwards at a piece of work till they ache, they will feel relieved if you use them for a while in a horizontal position. Now what would be thought of the argument, that because the change of employment in this instance produced relief, therefore there must have been a change of organs—the hands having done one piece of work, and the feet the other.

Mr. Cerate. You have succeeded better in your reply than I anticipated; but your opponent has reserved his principal argument, which I am inclined to think you will find it more difficult to answer. It is drawn from the effects which are produced by injuries of the brain on the mental manifestation. The

* Phren. Trans.

writers on phrenology are very copious upon this subject, and seem to lay uncommon stress upon it.

But I must leave it to your opponent to make out the argument.

Mr. Caution. Ay, he will be at home there. The chief supports of his system are derived from brutes and maniacs: it must surely rest on a rational foundation!

Mr. Phrenetic. It is easier to laugh than to reason. A philosopher is not to be deterred in his pursuit of truth by a few sallies of wit. Some persons can joke better than they can argue. But to the point. It has been remarked in cases of mental derangement, that though some faculties are impaired, others are not, and some are even improved. This agrees with phrenology, which assigns a separate pair of organs to each faculty. For if the injury be limited to some of the organs, only their faculties will be affected. And as the injured organs might have formerly restrained others, the latter will now be manifested more fully than when the whole of the brain was in a sound state. But if the brain were a single organ, it could not be injured in any part without all the faculties being affected.

Mr. Prober. I am really surprised that phrenologists should build so much on so slender a foundation. If one organ be fitted for the manifestation of various faculties, it does not follow that an injury done to the organ must equally affect all the faculties. To illustrate this subject,—here is my pocket knife. It is a single organ, or instrument. It will serve to strike a light from in the morning when I rise; to spread the butter on the loaf, and cut of some nice slices for breakfast; to cut a shoot out of the hedge, and trim it into a walking-stick, as I take my morning ramble; but I cannot work it through a bone. Suppose the edge of the knife to be injured by being broken into a number of nicks or teeth. It will do just as well as before for striking a light, and nearly as well for spreading the butter. It will likewise serve to saw off the shoot, and all the little twigs that branch from

it; but it will not make so handsome a walking-stick. And it will now sever a bone, though it will not cut the bread and butter. Suppose the same injury done to the back of the knife instead of the edge. It will answer all its former purposes except the first, and it will make up for that defect by its usefulness as a saw.

Thus it may be with the brain. As a single organ it may serve to manifest all the faculties of mind; and it may receive an injury which will not at all affect some of the faculties, while a few may be impaired and others improved by it. A single organ, therefore, is sufficient to solve the phenomena alluded to quite as well as a plurality; and it has this decided advantage over the theory of phrenologists, that it accords with the simplicity of nature, which generally employs a single instrument for a variety of functions. So the hand is an organ with which I can feed myself, feel substances, carry weights, defend myself, and perform an almost infinite number of different operations. The loss of the thumb or a finger will disable it from doing some things, while others may be performed as well as ever.

Turning directly to Mr. Cerate, it was said by—

Mr. Lancet. If you call yourself a philosopher, and be in search of truth, I hope you are convinced by this time that you have got into the wrong track. For my part I do not think the philosophy of the human mind can be much promoted by measuring the skulls of beasts and madmen; we are in danger of losing our own senses, by puzzling our brains so much among these senseless creatures.

Mr. Cautey. I have long been of opinion that the reasoning by which phrenologists attempt to establish the plurality of organs, is more specious than true; and yet if this point cannot be clearly made out, the doctrine ought not to be dignified with the name of science.

Mr. Prober. In this they have been too precipitate. This honourable term was applied to the first crude essays. Formerly the names of some of the organs were

very different from what they are at present. There was the organ of murder, the organ of theft, etc. ; and there was as much impudence manifested in avowing and defending these singular terms, as ever an old hag discovered in detailing the dispositions and fortunes of a milk-maid, by the kindred science of palmistry. It was suspected by some, that the friends of the doctrine intended to make a push in parliament to procure an act, by virtue of which the professors should receive his majesty's commission to make a regular circuit of the kingdom, and, at appointed times and places, examine every cranium ; that every rogue might be at once detected and hanged. This would have been turning the thing to a practical account ; and a grateful nation could have done no less than erect a monument to their deliverers ; but, unfortunately, they were assailed with such a volley of ridicule and reproach, mixed with unanswerable argument, that they found it expedient to relax the organ of combativeness, and abandon the obnoxious terms ; for it was discovered that many possessed these frightful organs, largely developed, whom even a phrenologist could not suspect of having been guilty of the indicated crimes, or of any strong propensity in that direction.

Thus the labours of several years were demolished, and this new vagary was in danger of being consigned to that oblivion where a thousand preceding ones, on what is oddly called the philosophy of the mind, have expired, without the hope of a resurrection. But it happened, no doubt, that the organs of ideality and constructiveness were powerfully excited in the parents and nurses of this abortion, to devise the means of preserving its life ; they therefore set to work, invented a new nomenclature, and constructed a new fabric out of the ruins of the old one, in which it might live and prosper under another name. The principles of the system were generalized. What had been called the organ of murder, was now christened the organ of destructiveness ; and the new explanation is, that "the faculty produces the impulse, attended with desire to

destroy in general," and that the propensity may take different directions, in different individuals. A nurse may find it sufficient employment in hunting down the little creatures which fatten on the heads of children, as previously hinted by my friend Mr. Cautery; and others may gratify it, when it happens to be very strong, by choosing a killing profession, as that of butcher, sportsman, game-keeper, fish-monger, mole-catcher, rat-killer, etc. In such ways the disposition to kill may be both innocently and laudably indulged. If any one feel an irresistible itch to kill his fellow-creature, let him become a soldier, and destroy all before him, and he shall have the thanks of his country, and the praise of posterity. This faculty is allowed a very wide range, and may be quite as well pleased with destroying the dead as the living; for, "when very powerful, but combined with higher sentiments, equally vigorous, it renders the destruction of inanimate objects a delightful occupation."* For instance, what "a delightful occupation" it must be to a man of "vigorous" intellect and large destructiveness, to be employed from morning to night every day, in cracking nuts or breaking stones upon the high-road! You can now be at no loss, whenever you meet with this organ pretty large, to find something in the person's life correspondent to it; for it would be singular indeed, if he had not destroyed many things, either animate or inanimate.

That is not all, continued Mr. Prober: the organ of theft was changed for that of covetousness; and it was now granted that a large bump was no indication of a thief and robber, as the desire of gain might consist with honesty. But still it was found that some had possessed this protuberance, who were rather prodigal of wealth, than covetous; the name was therefore changed again, and now it stands for acquisitiveness, that is, a disposition to acquire, to lay up store—any thing. Every person wishes to possess something; it is a very easy matter, therefore, in every subject in whom

this organ appears large, to find the counterpart in the conduct. As an example: If an old lady has spent all her superfluous property upon lap-dogs, cats, and monkeys, of which her house is full; you will see in these the manifestation of the faculty of acquisitiveness.

Mr. Lancet. You remind one of certain patchwork professors, who, in attempting to stop one hole, make two; for if so many different actions may be referred to the same organ, it will be necessary to find that organ large in many more cases; and thus the expedient may create more difficulties than it can remove.

Mr. Prober. But this is provided for, by making the same course of life suit various organs. Thus, a general, who has distinguished himself in the service of his country by the conquest of her enemies, may wear any sort of skull, and yet his deeds of valour shall be made to accord with the principles of the science. If any of the following organs be somewhat above the average dimensions, it will sufficiently explain his conduct. 1. Combativeness. 2. Destructiveness. 3. Constructiveness. For what is more admirable than the structure of a large army? or more mechanical than its operations? Upon these the fate of battle principally depends. 4. Acquisitiveness. Marlborough, and his is not a solitary instance of the kind, was noted for covetousness. Many generals have made immense fortunes by the trade of man-killing; so that an avaricious man cannot easily choose a more lucrative employment. 5. Self-esteem or pride. This produces that high sense of honour for which military gentlemen are proverbial, and which not only accounts for the choice of the profession, but also for the glory acquired in it; for a proud man can never rest till his foe be humbled. 6. Love of approbation. This, we are told, gives ambition, vanity, and the desire of popular applause. Where, then, can it manifest itself more agreeably than in the army? 7. Cautiousness. This feeling cannot have a finer field for display than in the army, as the fate of nations often depends upon the wary conduct of a commander. Marius,

Wellington, and many other generals, owe much of their celebrity to caution. 8. Benevolence. Who has carried this virtue to a higher pitch of perfection than the hero, who, by his prowess, has become the saviour of his country ?

It would take up too much time, Mr. Prober still proceeded, or I could refer to eight other organs, any one of which, if above the average size, would account for his choice of the military profession, and his behaviour in it. The only thing, therefore, which a phrenologist has to do, when he wants to find the indication of a person's character on his skull, is, to examine first one organ, and then another, till he meets with one that will answer his purpose. It would be singular, if out of eight, or even sixteen, any of which would suit, he could not find one or two above the ordinary dimensions.

Mr. Cautery. There are only three things necessary to the perfection of this wonderful scheme. 1. To make one faculty manifest itself in a great variety of ways in different persons. By this device, if you happen to find, which is often the case, that persons of very different character have several of the same organs very similar in point of size, this will present no difficulties to a phrenologist. 2. To be able to refer the same trait of character to different persons ; for then you can be in no great danger of not finding one that will answer to it. 3. To have a sufficient number of organs. While the scheme was in its infancy there were but few organs said to be discovered ; and these were referred principally to particular actions. This allowed the professor no latitude, and he often blundered egregiously. But, by generalizing the faculties, and multiplying the organs, you may manage, with a little ingenuity, to make any cranium correspond, in some particulars at least, with any character.

Mr. Anodyne. I think I begin to see through this sublime science. But pray, sir, go on ; you have now got into the pith of the subject.

Mr. Phrenetic. The science is founded upon facts ;

and if the inductive philosophy of the immortal Bacon cannot be overturned, phrenology is in no danger. To oppose reasoning and ridicule to facts is like pouring water upon a rock. The only way to attack us with success, is to produce the craniums of persons, which, according to the principles of the science, do not correspond with their character. If this can be done, we are all fairly vanquished ; if it cannot, all opposition is vain.

Mr. Bolus. I should like very much to have the subject brought to the test ; but who of the company will lend us his head for the purpose.

Mr. Prober. I can save you that trouble. In the Transactions of the Phrenological Society, we have an account of James Gordon, a murderer, with the cerebral development as indicated by his cranium. As this is a case furnished by themselves, in proof of their science, they cannot complain of any unfairness, either in the biography or the shape of the skull. I shall undertake to demonstrate, from this case, that there is no truth in the science.

Mr. Phrenetic, much agitated and chagrined, I shall be happy to hear you for one.

Mr. Prober. Gordon was a native of the county of Mayo, in Ireland, and of the Roman Catholic persuasion. He could neither read nor write, and was extremely ignorant. The period of his leaving Ireland is unknown ; but reports prevailed about the time of his execution, that he left it on account of some deeds of violence which he had committed. According to his own account, he had been lingering in a very unsettled manner, in the south of Scotland, for five or six years before the perpetration of the murder. Elliott, the poor boy of whose death he was accused, is supposed to be born at Hexham, in England. And being rather weak in his intellects, and of a delicate frame of body, he gained a livelihood by carrying a small red box, containing a few trifling articles of hardware and stationery, through the pastoral parishes that lie contiguous to the border. Judging from the evidence of the wit-

nesses, as well as from the specimens that were exhibited to the court, the whole amount of the pedlar's property could scarcely have exceeded the value of a few shillings. They had met together in the course of their wanderings, and had travelled in each others company for three days prior to the murder, which was perpetrated on a common. No pains were taken to conceal the bloody deed: though the boy and his box were pretty well known, yet the murderer did not remove the body from the fatal spot; and actually travelled about the neighbourhood with the red box slung across his shoulder. The consequence was, that he was soon taken, and suffered the penalty of the law for his crime. A few other particulars will be cited in the course of the examination. The following is the development of the organs :—

1 Amativeness .. moderate	Upper Individuality .. full
2 Philoprogenitiveness large	20 Form full
3 Concentrativeness .. small	21 Size large
4 Attachment full	22 Colouring small
5 Combactivensness full	23 Locality full
6 Destructiveness very large	24 Order moderate
7 Constructiveness .. small	25 Time small
8 Acquisitiveness full	26 Number small
9 Secretiveness .. rather full	27 Tune small
10 Self-esteem full	28 Language, in so far
11 Love of Approbation .. full	as can be judged
12 Cautiousness large	from an examination
13 Benevolence .. moderate	of the cranium only .. full
14 Veneration large	29 Comparison small
15 Hope full	30 Casuality small
16 Ideality small	31 Wit small
17 Conscientiousness .. small	32 Imitation moderate
18 Firmness .. rather small	Wonder moderate
19 Lower Individuality large	

The man committed murder, and the organ of destructiveness is marked very large. Here the action and the organ correspond very well: look no further, and phrenology is established. But we must examine the matter a little more closely. It is an important part of the system that the organs exert a controlling influence over one another, and that several of them

must be carefully examined before we form a judgment of a case. Now, here are several large controlling organs. The organ of attachment is full. "It is one of the main sources of friendship." Gordon and the pedlar had been together three days; this organ had, therefore, time to operate in the boy's favour. Love of approbation is full, and benevolence moderate. These would exert all their power to divert the organ of destructiveness into some innocent channel; and one would think that either a strong desire of public approbation, or a moderate share of benevolence, would be sufficient, of itself, to restrain a man from murder. The important organ of veneration, too, is large. It is this which disposes men to be religious; and none but a phrenologist, I think, will contend that a large share of religion is insufficient to preserve a man from deliberate murder. But it must be particularly noticed that the organ of philoprogenitiveness is large. "It is the seat of the instinct by which we feel attached to offspring, and are desirous to protect children and young creatures in general." This organ would exert all its power to divert the destructive disposition into another channel; for the person murdered was not a man, but a boy, that, of course, it was the province of this organ specially to protect. Here, then, are five organs, one of the ordinary size, and four above it, which are all opposed to murder; and one of them, which is large, directly opposed to the murder of a young person. But, in spite of this formidable military array, the destructive disposition, which is not innately directed to particular objects, but depends for the course it shall take upon the regulating influence of other organs, acts in direct opposition to them, and destroys an object they were all engaged to defend, though the destructive propensity was no stronger in that direction than any other. If a large spring of water break forth in a perfectly level field, it will spread equally over all the surface; but if a bank were opposed to its progress in one direction, it would not leave the level part and run up the side of the bank. The system cannot

do without the mutual action of the organs on one another; and yet this case affords decisive evidence that there is no such thing.

Mr. Anodyne, who appeared now to be shook in the little faith he once possessed, said: I see the importance of the restraining power of one organ upon another. But we must have recourse to this expedient only in a time of need. It is to the phrenologist what an army of reserve is to a general. If the point can be carried without it, why, let it alone; if not, avail yourself of its aid. In the case of Gordon, the act corresponds with the organ, and a phrenologist need look no further. But if, instead of being a murderer, he had turned out a pious and good man, then the expedient would have saved the system; for in that case the five organs opposed to the murder would have been amply sufficient to form a virtuous character, and to divert a very large destructiveness into a course of action quite harmless, if not useful. But proceed with your demonstration.

Mr. Prober. The organ of language is marked full. The faculty of this organ is, we are told, to facilitate the knowledge and use of artificial signs or words. The bump is said to be found large in philologists, orators, and botanists. But instead of the learned gentleman, he was a complete ignoramus, and could neither read nor write.

Mr. Cerate. I think I can answer that. I suppose a phrenologist would assign two reasons why he was no scholar, though the organ of language happened to be full. 1. Circumstances were unfavourable to its development; it is probable he received no education. 2. The assistance of other organs might be necessary to the full development of this.

Mr. Cautery. Admirable! Propose yourself as member of the society, and turn lecturer; gaping audiences will be astonished to hear your profound disquisitions on the philosophy of mind, and to witness your complete emancipation from the shackles of vulgar pre-

judice ! But I see Mr. Prober is prepared to examine your reasons.

Mr. Prober. If Gordon was in circumstances unfavourable to the acquisition of learning, while a boy in his native country, that was not the case when he came to Scotland. In this land of schools, every one can read and write ; many peasants are acquainted with the learned languages ; and an ignoramus is despised. These circumstances would powerfully prompt the faculty ; every house he entered could supply him with a teacher willing to assist him, and it seems impossible that any man, with a strong desire to learn, could live so long among such a people, without acquiring the first rudiments of useful knowledge. Many, whose education has been neglected, and who have not afterwards enjoyed the advantages which were placed within the reach of Gordon, during his residence among the Scotch, have become respectable for their literary acquirements.

As to the assistance of other organs (looking towards Mr. Phrenetic) you have certainly no right, in this instance, to admit it. A poor, little, weakly creature, may excite pity and obtain relief ; but a fine, tall, full looking figure, who will do nothing, though, if there be any truth in appearance, he might achieve much by his own unaided efforts, is not so much deserving of help in his vocation, as of a whip for the chastisement of his indolence.

Mr. Lancet. I suspect that this full organ of language is a gentleman, who will plead his rank as an excuse for his laziness.

Mr. Anodyne. The plea cannot be admitted ; for no man of fortune would take up his abode in Gordon's upper story.

Mr. Prober. But if you will take the trouble to examine the development, you will perceive that some full sized organs did offer their assistance. Self-esteem, and love of approbation are both full ; and as these are signs of vanity, pride, and ambition, they must have prompted him powerfully, during his residence

in the north, amidst a high-minded and intellectual population, who looked on a dunce with contempt,—to exert the organ of language to the uttermost. The organ of hope, too, is full. This would raise him above discouragement in the prosecution of his studies; and, by holding out flattering prospects of success, would keep him steady to his purpose. With such important helps, how could he miss the attainment of literary eminence?

Mr. Cerate. You lay too much stress upon this organ. In the development, its size is expressed with some hesitation, "In so far as can be judged from an examination of the cranium only." This seems to be a candid acknowledgment, that there might be a mistake in this instance.

Mr. Prober. All the evidence, though not complete, is in favour of the fulness of the organ, and is, therefore, in support of my argument. But I can prove from other organs, that he ought to be a learned man. Individuality is large.

"This faculty gives the desire to know facts and things. It produces a talent for observation, and a capacity for details. Many persons are to be met with who are learned but not profound, who know something of almost all arts and sciences, and who are never at a loss to speak on any subject. Such persons generally have this organ large."*

Now look at this description, and see how it suits Gordon. 1. Had he "a talent for observation, and a capacity for details?" The writer of the account supposes he was almost an idiot! 2. Was he "learned?" We are told that he could neither read, nor write. 3. Did he "know something of almost all the arts and sciences?" He scarcely knew his right hand from his left. 4. Was he "never at a loss to speak on any subject?" He would, no doubt, have entertained us wonderfully by a lecture on the philosophy of the mind. This orator would not have held in his hand a written outline of his subject, nor would he have

* Trans. Phren. Soc.

wearied us by reading long extracts from the works of others.

"When large individuality," the same authority informs us, "is conjoined with ambition, and moderate confidence in one's own opinion, it conduces to that readiness of display which often passes for superior ability." In Gordon there was this conjunction; for self-esteem, and love of approbation, are both marked full, and these give "ambition," and more than "moderate confidence in one's own opinion;" but, whoever heard of his "readiness to display?" and, with whom could such a blockhead pass for a person of "superior ability?"

Besides these organs, which ought to have made him a general scholar, there are others which produce eminence in particular arts and sciences. Form is full. "The function of this faculty is to judge of form. It aids the portrait painter, and all persons engaged in the imitative arts." Size is large. "It gives the power of perceiving and judging of perspective." Locality is full. "It is large in the expert landscape painter." From the combination of these faculties, one might have expected a painter of distinguished ability. And he was within a trifle of being a first-rate geometrician; for "locality, individuality, size, and comparison, appear from observation to be essential constituents in a genius for geometry." He was deficient in only one of these organs, namely, comparison, which is marked small; but the other three rise considerably above mediocrity; he ought, therefore, at the least, to have been three-fourths of an Euclid.

Mr. Lancet. I wonder at the indiscretion of the society in publishing a development which would suit the author of an encyclopædia, and which really belonged to a stupid creature that could neither read nor write.

Mr. Bolus. You need not feel at all surprised. You may readily find as great contradictions between the skull and the character in every example they

have given. The business of a phrenologist is to find as many correspondences as he can between the organs and the life, to make a parade of these, and to take no notice of the differences. Superficial readers are satisfied with these partial representations; they are struck with the coincidences, and thus become converts to the doctrine.

Mr. Prober. The cranium of Gordon presents many other contradictions. The organ of combativeness is full, and that of cautiousness large. The former is the seat of courage, and the latter of fear. The same individual cannot have above an average degree of both. Acquisitiveness is assigned in the report as the motive which prompted to the murder, because it is marked full; though it is admitted that the pedlar's box of wares was not worth more than a few shillings! and yet he might have acquired double the sum by means much less perilous to himself, and to which his large cautiousness must have infallibly directed him. For if acquisitiveness will not be satisfied with the lawful means of gaining wealth; yet it is the province of cautiousness to lead to the object by that path which is least beset with danger. A large cautiousness, therefore, could never allow a man to risk his life by committing murder for the sake of securing four or five shillings. Veneration is large, and conscientiousness small. A person who has received the knowledge of the supreme Being, is disposed by the former faculty to worship him, and by the latter, to live so as to please him. Now, to say that a man has a powerful sentiment of veneration, and a weak conscientiousness, is a contradiction; for you must have as great a desire to secure the favour of God, as to adore him. Both these sentiments may be misdirected; but they cannot exist in the same person in an unequal degree. And, in point of fact, while the organs are so dissimilar in the poor wretch, he manifested by his conduct an equal indifference to both piety and virtue.

Mr. Lancet, directing his conversation to Mr. Phrenetic, I really think, sir, you had better defer delivering

your next lecture, till you have duly weighed the arguments which have been advanced. He said nothing, but looked indignant.

Mr. Prober. There is one part of Gordon's conduct, which I defy all the phrenologists in the world to reconcile with the indications on his cranium. I refer to that fearlessness with which he exposed himself after the murder. The fact is admitted by the reporter, who says :—

“ He proceeded in a manner which was sure to lead to discovery. Instead of taking measures to conceal the body, he seems to have left it on the very spot on which he deprived it of life. And far from endeavouring to escape, by withdrawing himself from the country, he continued for some time wandering through the very country which Elliot used to frequent, and offering for sale those very articles by which the unfortunate boy had obtained his support.”*

And he carried the articles in the pedlar's red box, which he publicly exhibited for two days after the murder. Not a single symptom of fear was manifested after the bloody transaction, nor a single attempt made to conceal either the body of the boy or himself, or to avoid suspicion of his guilt ; for he left the body exposed where the deed was perpetrated ; he continued in the neighbourhood till taken, and he seemed to court detection by exposing the box to public view, and the contents of it for sale.

Mr. Anodyne. It is unnecessary to say more on this part of the subject.

Mr. Bolus. Much more may be advanced : proceed, sir.

Mr. Prober. Compare this conduct with the indications on the cranium. You will be prepared to expect that the organ of secretiveness and cautiousness are not to be found, or else that they are so diminutive as to be unable to manifest their faculties. Instead of this being the case, however, the former is marked rather full, and the latter large. As the least of these are above the ordinary dimensions, either of them was

* Phren. Trans., pp. 339, 336.

more than sufficient to dispose the murderer to secrecy; for secretiveness is an innate propensity to conceal; and cautiousness, which produces fear, is perfectly inconsistent with that contempt of danger which he manifested. But the two combined must have prompted him so powerfully to use every possible precaution to conceal the crime, and evade detection, that, on the principles of phrenology, his behaviour is utterly unaccountable.

Mr. Caution. The usual subterfuge of circumstances being unfavourable to the development of these organs will not avail; for they were calculated to rouse them to the greatest exertion, since he could not be ignorant that he had risked his own life in taking that of a fellow-creature; a stronger motive, therefore, to secrecy and caution, could not be conceived.

Mr. Cerate. You seem, sir, to have overlooked the explanation which is given in the Transactions of this part of Gordon's conduct; an explanation which I hope you will deem quite satisfactory; it is as follows:—

“Possessing a full endowment of hope, deficient reflection, and no great secretiveness; it would never occur to him that it was necessary to use any precautions to prevent detection of the crimes he had committed, and of which, at the time they were committed, there was no living witness. Unable himself to trace or to foresee the consequences, his hope might suggest to him that no person would ever know, what no mortal eye had seen perpetrated; and not possessing that strong desire for concealment, and that instinctive power of veiling his acts and intents which is given by secretiveness, he proceeded in a manner which was sure to lead to a discovery.”*

Mr. Prober. I am sorry, sir, to say that I cannot view this account of the matter in the same light you seem to do. It is said that he “possessed no great secretiveness.” In the development this organ is marked as rather full. This denotes somewhat more than an average share, and very naturally leads us to expect a rather full manifestation of the faculty, especially, as circumstances could not fail to rouse its energies to the uttermost; and yet this organ did not act

at all: "he not possessing," it is added, "that strong desire of concealment, and that instinctive power of veiling his acts and intents, which is given by secretiveness." He had the organ, we have seen, rather full; and if he had not a "desire of concealment, and an instinctive power of veiling his acts and intents" correspondent to it, then the system is overturned. The writer seemed to be aware that if the faculty really existed, it must have been manifested on this occasion: and, since there was no attempt at concealment, the existence of the faculty was denied. But then, how does he get rid of the organ? Why, he first states that the man possessed "no great secretiveness," and afterwards loses sight of it altogether!

Another reason why he used no precaution is, he "possessed a full endowment of hope." This is singular. It strikes me that there would have been more room to hope to avoid detection by acting warily, rather than rashly. This full endowment of hope, therefore, instead of checking, would stimulate the organ of secretiveness.

"Deficient reflection" is a third reason assigned for Gordon's rashness. The reflecting faculties in his circumstances, could not possibly oppose secretiveness; if they acted at all, they would be helps, and not hinderances. Had these faculties been large, they would have added much to secretiveness; but as they were small, they would add but little; and yet the slightest degree of reflection is sufficient to satisfy a murderer, that if he hope to escape punishment, he must endeavour to conceal the crime. If these faculties were quiescent, or altogether wanting in Gordon, they would neither stimulate nor restrain secretiveness, in which case, this faculty would have been at liberty to exert its native energy, and the result must have been a rather full manifestation.

Mr. Bolus was just going to proceed with a rejoinder.

Mr. Prober. Stop a moment. If secretiveness could not act where reflection is deficient, it could not act in

brutes ; but the truth is, that though their reflecting faculties are deficient, they can manifest this faculty as perfectly as we can do. Phrenologists speak much on the "spontaneous activity" of the faculties ; and give the following account of the propensity in question, as referred to in another conversation : "Secretiveness produces the instinctive tendency to conceal. Man and animals are occasionally liable to the assaults of enemies, which may be avoided by concealment, in cases where strength is wanted to repel them by force. Nature, therefore, by means of this propensity, enables them to add prudence, slyness, or cunning, according to the dictates of the other faculties possessed by the individual, to their other means of defence."*

Thus, the attempt to reconcile the indications with the conduct has completely failed. Some reason must be assigned why a rather full secretiveness is inactive, in circumstances highly favourable to its manifestation. No organs, except those of hope and reflection, are even supposed to have exerted any restraining influence ; and these, we have shown, instead of paralyzing the spontaneous efforts of secretiveness, would act as stimulants.

Mr. Sirup made an honest confession, and said : this, it must be owned, is giving the system some home thrusts, and the little faith I had in it begins to stagger.

Mr. Prober. But I have not yet done with this part of the subject.

Mr. Anodyne. Have mercy, sir, or you will not leave the poor phrenologist a leg to stand on.

Mr. Prober. And yet, with your leave, my heaviest blow is yet to come. The writer, in the paragraph cited by Mr. Cerate, assigns reasons why Gordon did not "use any precautions to prevent detection of the crimes he had committed." Now, if any, either novice in the science, or professor of it, were examining the cranium of a person to see whether the indications

* Combe's Elements, p. 46.

corresponded with a total neglect of all precaution in his conduct, when his life was in the utmost peril, to which organ would he first direct his attention?

Mr. Cerate. To that of cautiousness, undoubtedly; because a deficiency there would fully explain the matter.

Mr. Prober. Then you would expect to find that organ small?

Mr. Cerate. Certainly.

Mr. Prober. But in the case under consideration it is large. Here we see the disingenuousness and dexterity of the writer. No one can suppose that he did not examine this organ; and no phrenologist can suppose that the largeness of it does not present a serious difficulty. Why then does he not attempt to remove it? There can be but one answer to this question: he could not. Hence he does not venture to say one word about it; and to divert the reader's attention from it, he turns to the organ of secretiveness, which is not so large, opposes to this the organs of hope and reflection, and then thinks, or rather wishes his reader to think, that he has sufficiently reconciled the incautious and fearless behaviour of Gordon with the appearances on the skull.

The "full endowment of hope" could not restrain the operation of cautiousness, any more than of secretiveness; for, in his circumstances, there could be no hope of escape but in the exercise of caution. There is not, therefore, a single organ opposed to the use of precautions, but in favour of them there are, 1. A rather full secretiveness. 2. A large cautiousness; and 3. A full love of approbation: for this full desire of enjoying the good opinion of others must have been a powerful inducement to him to keep the crime a secret. Their combined influence could not fail to be irresistible; and yet nothing was done. A more complete refutation of bumpology need not be desired.

Mr. Sirup. What you say has much weight in it. But it seems to me as though the writer thought Gordon to be scarcely *compos mentis*; for he supposes that he

would be under no apprehension of a discovery, merely because no human eye was privy to the atrocious act. If idiocy made him insensible to danger, this may account for his large cautiousness being quiescent; since his fears could only be excited by a sense of his perilous condition.

Mr. Prober. I beg to reply. 1. "Many of the lower animals, as the hare, rook, etc., possess the organ largely developed."* If he were not therefore more stupid than a brute, this faculty would have been excited in him, as well as it is in them; and if neither the innate activity of the faculty, nor any outward circumstances, could give the sense of danger and inspire caution, then this organ, on phrenological principles, ought to have had no place in his head. 2. The man, it is granted, was ignorant and stupid; but had he been an idiot, no judge and jury would have concurred in finding him guilty of murder.

This case is decisive against the system. The strength of the faculty is measured by the size of its organ, and the manifestation will be in proportion to both, when neither circumstances nor other organs oppose. These are the principles upon which the science rests. Demonstrate in one instance the want of this correspondence, and you have demonstrated that phrenology is nothing but a compound of contradictions. Here we have the organ of cautiousness, or fear, large; no circumstances can be imagined more likely to produce a full development of it, than those in which Gordon stood after the murder; no organs are opposed to it; and two, above mediocrity, lend their aid; and yet he betrayed no fear whatever; employed no means to escape arrest, and "proceeded in a manner which was sure to lead to a discovery." The demonstration therefore is complete, that the manifestation of the faculties, in circumstances the most favourable, bears no proportion to the size of the phrenological organs.

Mr. Cautery. Nothing indeed can be more contrary

* Combe's Elem., p. 58.

to nature, than this rule of proportion for which phrenologists contend. Would a man be thought in his sober senses, who should affirm that the disposition and power to perform manual labour is in proportion to the bulk of the body? or that the best pedestrian is he who has the largest pair of legs? Some men will do twice the work with a small organ, or instrument, as others will do with a large one.

Mr. Syringe, who had been some time fumbling for his brains, having partially delivered them to the care of the lecturer the night before, just at this moment laid hold of them, and exclaimed, Ay, I see through it. The natural organs of motion to the body are the legs. My lad Tom, with a pair of slender shanks, like drum-sticks, can run six miles in an hour, while our neighbour, Sir Henry, with his gouty organs, three times as large, cannot set one leg before the other. If the manifestations were in proportion to the magnitude of the organs, the bloated epicure of twenty-four stone would possess twice the agility and strength, in every limb, of an ordinary man of half his bulk and weight. And I know of no reason why the rules should be applied to the organs of the brain, and not to all the organs of the body, except that the system of phrenology requires it.

The wit of Mr. Syringe encouraged another gentleman to hazard a remark or two, namely :—

Mr. Cephalic. The organs of the brain, I perceive, said he, cannot be reduced to any general rule in their operations. An odd one will sometimes do its proper work very well; another is lame and cannot, however large, move a single step; a third turns sulky, and will not stir an inch, though three or four giants are endeavouring to drag it along; and a fourth sets off like a mad horse, which runs away with its rider, and in spite of several lusty fellows, who attempt to check him in his course, or to drive him off in another, he breaks through all restraint, nor neither stops nor turns till his strength be spent. And as to circumstances, an organ will be lazy when they are most propitious; and

at other times will overcome them, when they are most adverse. These freaks of the organs are very amusing, though to my mind they are quite unaccountable. But you said awhile ago, that any cranium will suit any character. I should like to see how Gordon's head will sit upon another man's shoulders.

Mr. Prober. When I said, any skull will suit any character, I meant in several particulars, and one character quite as well as another; though in every instance there will be many traits which have no indications on the cranium; as I hope I have abundantly shown in the case of Gordon. I am quite prepared to show that Gordon's skull will fit any other person quite as well as it does himself. Name your man and I will set to work: it will at least amuse you.

Mr. Syringe. Upon whom shall we fix?

Mr. Bolus. Buonaparte.

Mr. Prober. Very well. Now look at Gordon's development, and I will apply it to the emperor. Combativeness is full; and we all know how much Napoleon was in his element in the field of battle. Destructiveness is very large; and it is many centuries since the world produced one in whom this faculty was so extensively manifested. Amativeness is moderate. His indulgence in this propensity exactly agrees with this indication. Acquisitiveness is full. This disposed him to acquire that immense wealth by which he enriched himself and family. To this organ also is to be attributed his accumulation of works of art, those treasures of the pencil and chisel, which he procured from every country whither he carried his conquests. Secretiveness is rather full; and this, combined with large cautiousness, accounts for that profound dissimulation with which he masked his designs. How frequently did he draw the net so cautiously, that his victim was not apprized of his intentions, till it was too late to escape! We see the full development of these organs, especially of the latter, in the case with which he provided for his own personal safety; so that though he fought

so many battles, I never heard that he received a wound; and the few times he was defeated, the precipitancy of his flight, to the utter neglect of his army, as in his retreat from Russia and Leipzig, demonstrate the magnitude of his fears. Hope is full. This organ drew him on from conquering unto conquer; and in seasons of adversity, did not leave him the victim of despondency. Conscientiousness is small; and no man, I believe, paid less regard to justice, when the propensities were to be gratified; or was less troubled with scruples of conscience. Firmness is rather small; and under misfortunes, which are the times when this faculty is tested, his fortitude was rather deficient. Lower individuality is large, and upper individuality is full. "It produces a talent for observation, and a capacity for details. Many persons are to be met with, who are learned, but not profound; who know something of almost all arts and sciences, and who are never at a loss to speak on any subject. Such persons generally have this organ large. When conjoined with ambition, and moderate confidence in one's own opinion," (and it is the cranium under consideration,) "it conduces to that readiness of display which often passes for superior ability." Compare this with the bulletins which he published in the days of his greatness, and with his conversations at St. Helena, as published by O'Mera and Count Las Casas, and you must be struck with the exact resemblance between the skull and the character. Size is large. "It gives the power of perceiving and judging of perspective. Some officers in the army, in forming their companies into lines, estimate the space which the men will occupy with perfect accuracy; and others can never learn to judge correctly of this requisite; and the organ has been observed largely developed in the former. Locality also may conduce to this talent." It will not be disputed, I think, by any military man, that Napoleon possessed this talent in an eminent degree, to which, no doubt, his full locality contributed its full share. This latter faculty also gives "the inclination to travel. The organ exists

in animals ; and, by becoming active at certain seasons, is supposed to prompt them to migrate. It is large in the woodcock and swallow." This explains the strange irresistible itchings with which our hero was troubled "at certain seasons" to migrate to Italy, Germany, Russia, etc. Language is full. This produces oratory ; and every one has heard of the electrical effect which his orations produced on the army.

Mr. Phrenetic. This is mere ridicule. Every great discovery has been treated in the same way for awhile, at first. Truth has so much of ignorance and prejudice to encounter, that her progress in illuminating the world is usually slow ; but it is consolatory to the sons of science to know, that her march is like that of the great orb of day, steady and irresistible, and that she will continue her course, till all feel her enlivening influence, and confess her heavenly origin.

Mr. Cautery. The ridicule employed by my friend is connected with this argument, and arises out of it. It is the common cant of every silly theorist, that mankind had been in darkness till their eyes were blessed with a sight of this taper, that all who laughed at it were enemies to the light of science, and that all who admired it were philosophers, who rose superior to vulgar and long established errors. Every conceit is not a sun of light. Phrenology is an *ignis fatuus*, a Will-with-a-wisp, which leads its followers into the bogs of error, and there leaves them.

Mr. Prober. I appeal to the company, whether Gordon's skull does not fit Napoleon quite as well as himself ; and yet two characters more perfectly dissimilar cannot well be conceived. It will serve equally well for any other person. Put it on the shoulders of a pious and learned divine. You have veneration large, which is the indication of his piety ; and language full, which accounts for his learning ; and it will be very easy among the other organs to find some which will answer to the minor shades of his character. Had this been the skull of Raphael, it possesses, we have seen, the bumps necessary to produce a first-rate

painter. In short, mention anybody you please, and this wonderful cranium will suit him. Is your character very courageous? Here is a full combativeness. Is he remarkably fearful and timid? Here is a large cautionsness. Is he of a sour violent disposition, so that your life is in danger from him? Destructiveness is very large. Is he of the most sweet and friendly disposition? Attachment is full. Is he a lying knave? You see secretiveness is rather full. Is he a thief and robber? You see acquisitiveness is quite full. Is his moral sense nearly or quite extinct? You see conscientiousness is small. Has he a good opinion of himself? This is produced by full self-esteem. Does his character stand high with the public? This is produced by full love of approbation. Is he considered the most godly man in the neighbourhood? This proceeds from large veneration. Is he an adept in all the arts and sciences? Look at individuality, self-esteem, love of approbation, and language, these are all full; and these form the accomplished scholar. Is he a complete dunce? Such was Gordon!

Mr. Phrenetic. It is not pretended that there are no difficulties in the science; but though they may be numerous, and some of them formidable, we have met with none which are insurmountable.

Mr. Prober. In looking over the Transactions of the Society a short time ago, I was struck with several which I noticed.

Mr. Anodyne. Can you turn to them readily?

Mr. Prober. Here they are.*

Mr. Cautey. Have the goodness to read them.

Mr. Prober.—

“We must distinguish between the neat size of the skull, and the gross dimensions of the head. Inattention to allow for and except several things which make up the latter, will infallibly produce mistake in determining the developments.”

This admission shows that nothing can be done by

* See pp. 113—116.

merely looking at a living subject; for you may mistake a lump of flesh for a bone. Why then do phrenologists insult a stranger by staring him out of countenance, when the eye can give no certain information?

Mr. Bolus. And I am at a loss to know how they will feel through an inch of flesh, and determine the size and shape of a portion of bone underneath. They had better therefore, I think, let living heads alone.

Mr. Prober. But if they will do a little in this way, and happen to make a blunder, they may insist upon it that they have been imposed upon by "the gross dimensions," and that "the neat size of the skull" will exactly correspond with the character. Here they will be quite safe; for no man will submit to have his skull laid bare in order to confute them.

"There are also certain irregular and accidental bony excrescences and elevations which must not be confounded with the characteristic signs of the organs. There are even some protuberances constantly met with, which have no manner of reference to the development of the organs."

When you have, therefore, a bump or two to spare, call these "bony excrescences." In this way you may dispose of the large protuberances which appeared on the head of Gordon, just above the organs of veneration, cautiousness, individuality, language, etc.

"Results of the examination of the head cannot generally be relied on, after the individual has reached that period of life, different in different persons, when the brain begins to diminish in size. The most certain indications are given at those ages in which the faculties have the greatest degree of activity."

Mr. Lancet. I am afraid this will spoil the whole science, which is said to be founded upon experiments; for, how do phrenologists know that their examinations of heads were made at the proper time, especially as "it is different in different persons?" Have they ascertained that those persons, whose skulls they have examined after death, and from the indications on which they have built much of their system, happened

to die just at the period "when the faculties had the greatest degree of activity?" If not, the results, according to their own confession, "cannot be relied on." And certainly people do not generally die just in the prime of life. This throws all into confusion.

Mr. Cautey. But, as a phrenologist, you may profit by it, and insist, when you are out in your calculations, that the skull is either too young or too old. Thus you may solve all the difficulties which appear on the cranium of Gordon. But, read on, sir.

Mr. Prober.

"It sometimes happens, that several organs in the vicinity of each other, are equally or proportionally developed; so that, in place of a protuberance, from which the indications might be taken, a smooth or regular surface is met with."

Mr. Syringe. This is very perplexing; for in these cases you can know nothing of the size of the organs.

Mr. Cautey. So much the better. You can then suppose them to be large or small, just as the case may require.

Mr. Prober.

"The organs, too, which are placed behind the orbits of the eyes, are not readily distinguished."

All very right, You may then make them just the size wanted; and you will not be "readily" detected.

"But the greatest difficulty arises from the circumstance of any one organ being so extremely developed, as to push the neighbouring organs from the places usually occupied by them."

How provoking is this. But, when a Gulliver pushes the poor Lilliputians about in this uncereemonious way, the little folks should take the advantage of him when he is asleep, spread a net over him, and peg him down, that he may not be able to maltreat his neighbours in this shocking manner. What a pity that some plan has not been adopted to reduce these quarrelsome organs to order. This is the more desirable, as the other organs can keep the peace towards each other without difficulty. We never heard of the organs of hearing

pushing those of sight to the top of the head, nor of the eyes, by a stroke, displacing the nose, and obliging it, in order to break its fall, to perch upon the chin. It is much to be lamented that a better police is not established among these organs of the brain. Let us hope that the philosophy of mind, when more cultivated, will find a remedy for these disorders, which endanger the whole science.

Mr. Cautey. In the mean time, learn to profit by the confusion. If you cannot find an organ to your mind, insist upon it that there has been a battle royal among these gentlemen, and that the one you want has been driven into exile.

Mr. Sirup. What! have you not done reading yet? I think there will be no end to these difficulties. I am far, however, from being weary of them, as we get over them so pleasantly.

Mr. Prober. I have only two or three more.

"It must not be imagined that it is the mere surface of the brain which constitutes the organs. On the contrary, these are conceived to extend downwards, throughout the whole or nearly the whole mass of the brain."

Mr. Cautey. This is a very awkward affair. How can we ascertain the size of an organ from the small portion which extends to the surface? May it not push its way into the interior as well as sideways or upwards? Admit this and the science is ruined. If you deny it, you have no proof; you can only "imagine" and "conceive."

Mr. Prober. But still, by leaving yourself at liberty to imagine and conceive, you may get rid of a thousand difficulties, against which you could not oppose a single demonstration.

"It is possible, too, that there may exist organs, no part of which approaches to the surface."

Very well; then you cannot have any indications of these on the cranium. And these interior organs may assist or restrain those which lie on the surface; and

then you are out in your calculations. Nay, further; since the organs can push, these hidden ones may push some of their smaller brethren on the surface, which will cause protuberances on the cranium; and these protuberances will, of course, be taken as indications of the vigour of the external organs, though they are really such of the hidden ones only.

Mr. Cautery. But, when you are quite fast, you may find a solution of your difficulties by having recourse to these concealed organs; and, because they are concealed, nobody can contradict you.

Mr. Prober.—

“It is certain there are convolutions in the brain so situate as not to contribute directly to the external form.”

It is equally certain that the development of these cannot be indicated by the “external form.” In fact, we have nothing but confusion. Some organs are on the surface, and others in the interior;—one is working in this direction, and another in that;—one poor fellow is pushed out of his house, and sent a begging, and his comfortable habitation occupied by the son of violence who disinherited him. This disorder reduces the science to uncertain guesses.

Mr. Cautery. But you need not be alarmed at that; for, if you should guess wrong the first time, lay the blame upon these secret enemies, and guess again. It was some of these concealed rogues, no doubt, who exerted a paralyzing influence upon many gigantic organs in the head of Gordon, which promised great things, but did nothing.

Mr. Prober. I have done. By this time I hope we all feel qualified to turn lecturers on phrenology, to call ourselves disciples of the immortal Bacon, and to spout away on the march of intellect, the age of reason, and the philosophy of mind! But seriously. Without taking the trouble to examine skulls ourselves, we want no better proof than what is furnished by the admissions, evasions, and hypothesis of phrenologists, to satisfy us

that they meet with many obstinate cases, which will not yield to the principles of their system.

Mr. Phrenetic. I was unwilling to disturb your mirth, and have therefore heard, with patience, your humorous remarks on the extracts. I have only to observe, in reply, that the science is founded upon facts against which it is useless to employ either wit or argument. If all were confusion and uncertainty, as it is pretended, it would be impossible to predict the natural talents and dispositions of a person from the structure of his cranium.

Mr. Anodyne. Upon this point, I understand, the professors are rather shy, and manifest a large cautiousness. Indeed I suspected Mr. Cautey was going too far when he stated at setting out, that a phrenologist, "by examining a person's skull, will divine his character."

Mr. Prober. Phrenologists state distinctly that the science "does not enable them to predict actions." But it certainly does enable them to predict a character. The Transactions of the Society contain a remarkable instance of this, which is more than sufficient to overturn all which the gentlemen opposite have said on the other side of the question.

Mr. Cerate. Come, let us have this notable instance.

Mr. Prober. Hand me the book, and I will read it. The cast of a head was presented to a professor, with no other information than that the individual from whom it was taken "had received a good education, and moved in enlightened society." The following character was drawn:—

"The individual would be *decidedly moral and intellectual, and little prone to animal indulgence*. He would be scrupulous and honourable in the extreme, with a great aversion to debt; *ambitious of distinction*, or desirous to please, but exceedingly modest, and most esteemed by those who knew him best. *His justice, though great, would not be severe, but would be softened by benevolence, and elevated by veneration*. The intellect would be penetrating, but would have a greater tendency to speculate on moral than on physical causes. He would shine more in the private circle than in public. His understanding would be slow, but sound in its con-

clusions; and he would be much troubled with doubts and difficulties in his decisions. The individual would not worship wealth, but *he would have a prudent regard for property, and would calculate his expenses and his income, so as to keep the former considerably within the latter.* He would be alive to music. He would be religious, and a *sincere worshipper of God.*"*

Mr. Prober continued. Those parts of the estimate are correct, according to the writer, which are put in italics, and upon which I laid the proper emphasis in reading. Let those who think there is no truth in the science, look at this case.

Mr. Cautey. This is, no doubt, the best specimen of successful guessing which the society could furnish; and yet not more than half of it is marked as correct. They could, I suspect, have supplied instances in which the failure was nearly total.

Mr. Prober. With the previous information "that the individual had received a good education, and moved in enlightened society," any one present could have guessed as well without the cast, as this phrenological wizard did with it. By "enlightened society," we should understand persons of well informed minds, and studious habits; and we could be at no loss in forming a general estimate of the person's character from his education and his associates. Men of learning and studious habits are generally "moral and intellectual, and little prone to animal indulgence;" are "honourable and ambitious of distinction." Nearly all men "have a great aversion to debt," whether they run into it or not; and where and when did the man live, who was not "most esteemed by those who knew him best?" for a man is best known by his friends, and they certainly esteem him most. A bookish gentleman is generally a speculator "on moral," or "physical causes;" and as it is easier, and more fashionable, to speculate on the former than on the latter, we should speculate or guess that "he would have a greater tendency" to moral disquisition, as the chances lay on

* Phren. Trans., p. 310.

that side. Gentlemen who are devoted to learning and study, are seldom spendthrifts; and therefore much would not be hazarded in saying, that "he would have a prudent regard for property, and keep his expenses within his income." And as all in these kingdoms profess to worship God, except a very few who are atheists; and as every man must be the judge of his own sincerity, and in their religion all men profess to be sincere; there could be no great risk in stating, that "he would be a sincere worshipper of God." These are all the particulars in which our oracle happened to be right; and they are most of them so worded, as to admit of considerable latitude of interpretation, and therefore could not easily miss.

Mr. Prober still proceeded with fluency and animation: when the language was more definite, the scientific gentleman was generally wrong. The subject was to be scrupulous and honourable in the extreme, and exceedingly modest. His intellect would be penetrating, and he would shine more in the private circle than in public. His understanding would be slow, but sound in its conclusions; and he would be much troubled with doubts and difficulties in his decisions. He would not worship wealth, and would be alive to music. In all these particulars our diviner turned out a false prophet. I am surprised at the failure of one of the predictions. It is said, "he would be desirous to please." This feeling is so general, that it may be imputed to almost any one at a venture, without much danger of mistake.

Mr. Anodyne. This case certainly affords no aid to the cause, and I am quite satisfied that phrenology has no foundation in truth; but my organ of wonder is powerfully excited, when I reflect that several learned men rank among its patrons.

Mr. Prober. On a little closer inquiry, you will find, I believe, that their number is very small. Most of the converts to this new science are young men, who have received what is called a liberal education, and yet know but little; being more addicted to free living

than to hard study. They can talk in a superficial way on the arts and sciences ; and this froth of learning is sufficient proof to the vulgar, who cannot see below it, that they are brim full of erudition. As this is the age of discovery, these literary coxcombs are always on the alert, and hail with acclamation any new conceit which claims kindred to philosophy ; because in this way they can maintain, at a small expense, the reputation of being penetrating geniuses of the first order.

Mr. Lancet. The jargon about the organs, the attempt to reduce the confusion to system, and the alliance impudently claimed for this nonsense with the sciences, looks very much like an experiment made by some graceless wits, on the credulity of mankind ; and one cannot forbear laughing with them at the zeal of their dupes in propagating the delusion.

Mr. Prober. Is it not as commendable an enterprize to rescue a noble science out of the hands of the vulgar, who have debased it for centuries, as to invent a new one ? I would, therefore, recommend to these friends of science and of intellectual improvement, to turn their attention to the science of moles. Fortune-tellers can ascertain all the important events of our lives, by the appearance of moles on certain parts of our bodies. Nothing can be more easy than to construct a most bewitching philosophical system out of the rude elements of the art in its present state of degradation. Let the situation of a mole be the sign of a particular faculty :—one on the forehead, for instance, shall be the indication of impudence. From the size of the moles you may prognosticate the strength of the faculties. The colour of the moles may betoken the result of enterprize :—from red ones we may augur prosperity, and from black ones adversity. Circumstances may be called in, when wanted, to help or hinder the moles ; and these gentlemen must, occasionally, perform the same office for one another. The different shades of colour, too, will often help you out of a dilemma. Thus, with a little dextrous management,

this sublime science may be rescued out of the hands in which it has languished for ages, and be raised to that rank in the list of modern discoveries to which, on account of its great importance, it is so justly entitled.

Mr. Caution. You have set to work my organs of imitation and constructiveness; and they have already manufactured a system of which I am disposed to think this company will approve.

Mr. Sirup. Ay, to be sure! Pray what is it?

Mr. Caution. I have been thinking, suppose we take palmistry out of the hands of the gipsies, and raise it to the dignity of a science. Let us itinerate the country with packages containing casts of hands, from which, as learned professors, we will deliver lectures on the science, and prove to demonstration that one set of lines denotes the faculties, and another the pastimes of the individual. We must employ the usual cant about the philosophy of mind, and the laws and works of nature; and play the same tricks with the lines, that phrenologists do with the organs. Let the lines assist or restrain one another, as the case may require; let circumstances rule the lines, or the lines govern circumstances; let the lines every now and then push one another out of their proper places; and let the strength of the faculties and the success of pursuits be regulated by the length of the lines. All the curves must be carefully noticed, and made ominous of anything which may be wanted; the science must be christened, and go by the name of cheirology;* and all opposers must be stigmatised as ignorant, prejudiced, interested in the support of antiquated systems, and enemies to the march of mind. This scheme would soon produce thousands of converts; and by selling to them "Principles of the Science," and "Transactions of the Society," and "Sets of Casts," for them to pore over, we should soon make our fortunes——

Mr. Anodyne. Stop! stop! The freeness of your

* From *Keir* the hand, and *Logos* a discourse.

remarks have caused Mr. Phrenetic, together with Mr. Cerate, who seems to consider himself insulted, to leave the room. He was gruelled enough by argument; there was no occasion to use banter. I saw by his colour coming and going that his patience was gone; and I am sorry you pushed him so hard; for, supposing phrenology to be all fiction, it is harmless.

Mr. Caution. I dare say you have heard him make much more free with the Bible, than we have done with his system; and there seemed to be no other way of humbling his philosophic pride than by pointing against it the artillery of wit. Besides, phrenology is not so innocent as you suppose, since it leads directly to materialism.

Mr. Sirup. I have often heard this objected to it; but you know phrenologists deny it, and laugh at the fears of christians.

Mr. Prober. Yes; and tell them that they should not be afraid to follow truth wherever she may lead them. When they inform the fearful, that the will has no particular organ, but may range freely among them all, and restrain the sensual, and cultivate the intellectual, they are only secretly jesting with a christian's feelings; for they fearlessly maintain, that no force of education or habit will ever root out one strong propensity and implant its opposite.* Indeed were they seriously to admit that, either by the power of the will, or supernatural influence, large sensual organs could be subjected to small intellectual ones, the whole system would be destroyed; for if the dwarfs can be so disciplined as to conquer the giants, then the principles of phrenology will be reversed, and the less the organs are, the more vigorous will be the manifestations.

Mr. Caution. And here we come at the true reason why infidels so eagerly embrace this fiction. They see its tendency:—they know that phrenology is opposed to revealed religion, and on that account

* Phren. Trans., p. 138.

they are enraptured with it. This supplies another proof that their rejection of christianity is not owing to a want of evidence in support of its divine claims, but to a want of those spiritual and moral dispositions which it inculcates ; for he that can swallow the camel-bumps of phrenology, need not strain at the few gnats he may find in the Bible !

P.S. The reader will not be surprised to find that wines and glasses were forgotten in the discussion, and that each head-peace was consequently preserved perfectly clear. Neither will it be matter of astonishment that the worthy lecturer sustained so unimportant a part in what was advanced. He had to appear before a splendid auditory in the evening, and he was aware that two or three of the party would accompany him ; added to which, his arguments were all numbered ; to these he could bring nothing new ; it therefore became a matter of prudence, to act with parsimony, that he might not continue to ring the same chimes in the same ears. It may just be observed, that the party broke up like a company of swallows in autumn, and the vision fled.

LETTERS ON PHRENOLOGY.

LETTER I.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HULL ADVERTISER.

SIR,

Two to one is not fair play. What chance has Mr. Bromley against two such doughty champions as Z. and Mr. Levison? He supposed, it seems, that the vigour of a faculty, according to the phrenologists, is proportioned to the size of its organ. This, he conceived, led to materialism; and had he stated the doctrine fairly, his conclusion is undeniable, for then the character of a man must depend upon the size of his organs: "He who meets his neighbour on the highway, and blows out his brains, or stabs him to the heart, cannot consistently be an object of blame; he obeyed the law—he submitted to the organic destinies of his being."

Both his opponents, however, charge him with ignorance. Mr. L., indeed, takes off much of the opprobrium which attaches to this term, by applying it to all the opposers of his system. "I shall prove," says he, "that this gentleman, like all the opponents of phrenology, is entirely ignorant of its fundamental principles." This is remarkably modest: every one who examines the system, and does not become a convert to it, is a fool! Z. admits that Mr. B.'s consequence would be good, were it not that the feelings are under the direction and control of reason. He remarks, "Mr. B. considers it unjust to punish a criminal, because he obeys the impulses of his organ-

ization; and so would the phrenologist, if the feelings were not only checked by the higher sentiments, but under the control of reason. M. B. very disingenuously keeps out of view, that man is a rational creature; which is the more unpardonable, because the admission falsifies his representations of the doctrines of phrenology. . . . If you believe Mr. B., the existence of reason forms no part of the creed of the phrenologists." I am not sure that Mr. B. would not plead guilty to this last charge. Many people have entertained doubts whether reason have a place in the phrenological creed, not only because its abettors betray so lamentable a deficiency of it in their lucubrations on the science, but because they have not assigned to this important faculty an appropriate organ;—in their refined nomenclature, there is no organ of reasonativeness. And as reason is left out of their list of organs, is it any wonder if some doubt be entertained as to whether it really have a place even in their heads? What is the creed of a phrenologist? Why, among other things, that every faculty of the mind has a separate organ in the brain, which is indicated on the cranium. But reason has neither organ nor indication, in the phrenological creed; and as the existence of a faculty can only be known by its manifestation through an appropriate organ, we have no reason to believe, that the existence of reason has any place either in the creed or the mind of a phrenologist: and this, I believe, will satisfactorily account for all the nonsense which has been manifested by the patrons of this new science!

Z. does, however, admit that reason is a faculty of the human mind. I therefore beg leave to ask, has reason a separate organ? If it has, where is it situated?—and must not the vigour of the faculty be subject to the general law, and be "in proportion to the size and development of its appropriate organ?" If this be granted, it necessarily follows, that reason is as much under the influence of material organization as the other faculties; in which case, Mr. B.'s conse-

quence is established. If Z. should deny that reason has a separate organ of its own, and contend, as he seems to do in his last letter, that it has a free range among all the phrenological organs of the brain, stimulating and restraining them at pleasure, according to its sovereign dictates—this will involve the whole science in confusion; for if reason can fetter a great organ, and help a little one to master it, the rule of proportion will be completely changed, and the most vigorous manifestation of the faculties will be through the smallest organs, rather than the largest. But it may perhaps be said, that mankind in general are not governed by reason, but by feeling; so that still the science will be furnished with examples sufficient to support its credit, though a sovereign authority should be delegated to reason. I answer, It is an odd sort of philosophy of mind which will apply to none but fools: and I think none but fools will study such nonsense, and dignify it with the name of science. Besides, if reason can operate on every part of the brain, to assist or check the other faculties, the whole brain will be to it only as one organ; in which case, it may serve equally well as a single organ for the manifestation of the other faculties; and then we have worked round to the old and commonly received opinion, and phrenology becomes the baseless fabric of a vision.

Mr. Bromley, in laying down the doctrine of phrenology, stated, “that the strength and predominance of an intellectual faculty, etc., is as the magnitude and development of the organ in which it is supposed to reside.” If I can comprehend the profound mysteries of this occult science, the same doctrine precisely is contained in the proposition of Z., “that the activity of a faculty is proportioned to the size and development of its appropriate organs.” Mr. Levison, however, remarks on Mr. B.’s statement, that “it is quite erroneous, and was certainly engendered in the futile brain of Mr. B., and which he would now foist upon the science. Phrenologists never maintain, that

the size of an organ is a standard of functional power." Here Mr. L. is as much opposed to Z., as he is to Mr. B. It is ludicrous enough to see these phrenological combatants knock each other down with the blows which are aimed at their adversaries. And so it is quite erroneous, to suppose that there is any proportion between the strength of a faculty and the size and development of its organ! In the name of common sense, then, why is every lecturer furnished with a set of casts, and his dupes amused with his pretended coincidence between the size of the organs and the vigour of the faculties as manifested in the character? Why, in the Transactions of the Society, and all their other publications, is this coincidence the everlasting burden of their song, if it be quite erroneous? I thought the science had been built upon these pretended facts. Z. says, "The immense collection of casts made by Mr. Deville, and the collections of London and Edinburgh, are open to all the world, and place the science on the solid basis of observation and experiment." No, sir, you may throw your casts away; "it is quite erroneous!" But Mr. L. must explain himself. "The size of an organ is one condition; the degree of functional strength depends much on cultivation and constitutional activity. . . . When the cerebral organs have been cultivated, and the constitutional temperament is in unison, then we may decide on innate capacity, or tendencies, by an examination of the cranium." On this I remark: 1. There must be numerous instances in which there is no proportion between the indications on the cranium and the manifestations, or the rule would not be "quite erroneous." 2. The vigour of a faculty, we are told, depends much on temperament and cultivation: we infer that, at best, it depends little upon the size of the organ; and as cultivation and temperament are not indicated on the skull, and may not happen to agree with size, to lay any stress upon size, before the other particulars are known, would be very hazardous. 3. To visit prisons and convict ships, for the purpose

of procuring casts, can only tend to delude, unless the education, pursuits, and temperaments, of the prisoners are ascertained ; and two or three visits are not sufficient for this. There are four temperaments, according to Mr. L., "the nervous, bilious, sanguineous, and lymphatic." It would require some time and attention to discover which of these is most active in an individual. Nothing, therefore, can be more silly, upon their own principles, than the parade they make with their casts. 4. Mr. L. admits, that to examine the cranium for "innate capacity and tendencies," before you know the measure of cultivation and the constitutional temperament of the subject, would be premature and dangerous ; and to puzzle your own brain over another man's skull, to find his "innate capacity and tendencies," after you had taken the guage of his "capacity" from the results of cultivation, and discovered his "tendencies" from his temperament, would render your own innate capacity very questionable. And so, when by other means you have acquired the information you want, you may go to a skull doctor, and he will inform you, most scientifically, whether the craniological indications be correct or not ! A gipsy will undertake to tell me my fortune, before she has silyly elicited half the information which is necessary to set to work a phrenological prognosticator. 5. Education and temperament, then, it seems, may not be in unison with each other, or with the organs. Now how marvellous it is, that a phrenologist cannot see, in such cases, that the indications are false, and that the science is destroyed ! But he will say, "They are true sometimes." O yes, and if I were to affirm, that a corn upon the great toe is the indication of a murderous disposition, this mark, I believe, might be found on many who come to the gallows. I am almost tempted to turn philosopher !

The present state of the argument is simply this : if the vigour of the faculties be in proportion to the size and development of the organs, then man is a necessary agent—the mere slave of material organiza-

tion. Z. admits the rule of proportion, and also, but for the interposition of reason, the justness of Mr. B.'s consequence. I have shown that his exception destroys both his rule and his system. Mr. L. rejects the rule; and I have shown that, in doing so, he contradicts his brethren, and ruins his cause. The fact is, that if the vigour of the faculties depend upon anything else than the size and development of the organs, whether it be reason, cultivation, or temperament, no more can be learned respecting the strength of the powers of the mind by inspecting the organs, than by looking at the moon.

Mr. L. proposes to his opponent to "discuss with him, on philosophical principles, the axioms of phrenology." Three of these axioms he lays down, formally proceeds to the "proof" of them, then states them, "in the form of questions," and discusses them to admiration. It is a sage observation, that we are never too old to learn. I remember, when my mental powers were developing in the days of my youth, that I was taught to consider an axiom to be a proposition evident at first sight, which could not be made plainer by demonstration; and that axioms must be admitted without proof, to enable us to prove anything. But I must not any longer accompany a gentleman who is profoundly ignorant of what constitutes an axiom, in his most marvellous disquisitions on the march of intellect, the philosophy of mind, the age of reason, and the progress of science.

I am, sir, yours most respectfully,

MENTOR.

HULL, *June 24, 1828.*

LETTER II.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HULL ADVERTISER.

SIR,

THERE is not much in Mr. Levison's letter of last Friday, to which I seriously object. He reiterates the statement, "that the degree of functional power cannot be ascertained by the mere examinations of the cranium." In this I perfectly agree with him. He adds, "consequently, we never attempt to predicate actions." This, I think, is prudent. He next favours us with a dissertation on temperament, and informs us, that "two individuals with brains organized precisely the same," and "educated similarly," but of different temperaments, would manifest a great difference in the vigour of the faculties. He illustrates this by observing, "If two steam-boats were constructed of the same size, with equal paddles, but with engines of different powers, say the one 25, and the other a 10 horse power, we certainly should have a vast difference in their velocity, (in the ratio of motive power,) and yet when they were both at rest, an observer, by simply looking at them, would not infer this to be the case." In this illustration, the equal size of the vessels and paddles represents the equal size of the organs and skulls of the two individuals; the engines represent the faculties; and the difference in the power of the engines, represents the difference of temperaments. Mr. L. admits, that to measure the size of the vessels and paddles, could give him no information whatever respecting the power of the engines; by his own confession, therefore, he can learn nothing from the inspection of heads, as to the vigour of the faculties. This is what I proved in my last; and I thank him for his illustration, though it is an awkward one, in confirmation of my argument.

Mr. L. insists, however, that "the examination of a head in a living subject, is of incalculable benefit; for

here we may observe the constitutional temperament, with all the other conditions." There are several conditions which he cannot take into his calculations. He disapproves of my saying, that phrenologists represent man "as a necessary agent, the mere slave of material organization." He will grant, therefore, that man has both natural and moral liberty in the use of his faculties; but if so, the manifestations may be in perfect contradiction to the phrenological indications. An organ also, Mr. L. has observed, may be diseased; but in the living subject this cannot always be discovered; and no man, I presume, would submit to the operation of having his head cut off to satisfy a phrenologist as to the fact. Here is another condition which escapes his notice. Phrenologists generally, I believe, do not deny, that man possesses the faculties of will and reason; and that these have, or ought to have, the government of the rest. But they have found no organs for these mental powers, and, therefore, cannot measure them; consequently these essential conditions cannot be taken into their estimate. I wish Mr. L. had tried his strength on what I said in my last upon reason; and yet I must confess, that he manifested the organ of cautiousness by his silence. There are several other conditions I could mention, which will equally elude his calculations.

With regard to materialism: I did not push the matter further in my last, than merely insisting, that if the vigour of the faculties were in proportion to the size and development of the organs, man is a necessary agent, the mere slave of material organization. I did not go into the question, for I had not room for it, whether phrenology be opposed to the spirituality of the soul. If the system make man a necessary agent, and that necessity arise out of organization, the nature of the mind, in these circumstances, is a question of no great importance; as virtue, and vice, and moral responsibility are destroyed; the system, therefore, in this view of it, may be justly designated, materialism. The phrenologist who denies the charge,

ought to be able to show that moral liberty is consistent with this scheme. But this is impossible; for if the soul be free, it may restrain the large organs, and produce the most vigorous manifestations by means of the small ones; which cuts up the system root and branch.

But it may be worth while to inquire, whether this renowned science do not lead to materialism, in the very worst sense! as implying not only the thralldom of the mind, but as depriving it of all spiritual substance. Spurzheim says, "If it can be shown as a constant truth, that the brain is composed of many nervous systems, so distinct from each other, that the diversity of the origins, directions, and terminations of the fibrous fasciculi, of which they are composed, can be made evident to the senses, then it must without doubt be admitted, that an anatomy of the brain is established in perfect relation with our doctrine of the functions. . . . When any one shall show a central point of union for all the medullary fibres, then will the system which maintains a plurality of organs be satisfactorily refuted." Another writer says, "The independency and isolation of the organs of the external senses, furnish an analogy, which renders probable the independency and isolation of internal impressions." Some have inferred from such doctrines as the above, that the faculties being linked to the organs, being separate from and independent of each other, and having, like the organs, no "central point of union,"—they are the mere results of matter peculiarly modified; and that when a decomposition of an organ takes place, the faculty which was connected with it becomes extinct.

It is a fortunate circumstance, that we cannot take up a principle of phrenology, but we discover that it is opposed to some other principle, and ruinous to the cause. The phrenologists are everlastingly canting about the organs of the brain helping and restraining one another; but this we perceive at once must be utterly impossible, if they be separate from and inde-

pendent of each other. The analogy here contended for, is in contradiction to this mutual influence, and is, therefore, destructive of the system ; for the organs of the external senses do not operate upon each other : — the nose can neither shut nor open the eyes, nor strengthen or weaken the sight ; and the taste is as unable to practice upon the ears. But to return. If no example be produced of the doctrine being carried to the extent I have mentioned, I am quite aware that the abettors of the scheme will affect to deny and abhor the consequences I deduce from it. Take, then, the following :—

Mr. Forster, in his pamphlet on phrenology, says, “Moral education may be considered in a two-fold capacity : 1. That of exercising the intellectual faculties ; and, 2. That of regulating the moral character. They both proceed on the supposition that man has a will to control his propensities and other faculties ; and that his will is influenced by motives. The phrenologist admits a will regulated by motives ; and denies that the propensities are necessary and uncontrollable. As all the faculties of the mind have organs, it may be asked, what are the organs of the will ? The organ of individuality, which knows things, and regards them in their individual capacity ; the organ of comparison, which compares them, and gives therefore a choice ; and the organ of causality, which perceives the relation of cause and effect, produce a will, observe, compare, and control the other faculties, and influence the instruments of voluntary motion. I have called these three organs the board of control. When the organ of righteousness is the dictator, and its dictates acquire supremacy in counselling the will, a moral conscience is established.” I must make a few remarks upon this singular passage : 1. The writer is guarding against the doctrine of necessity, and therefore, saw that a controlling and regulating power must be lodged somewhere, so he establishes a board of control. And of what does this consist ? Of the soul, freely exerting her faculties ? No ; but of three material organs.

Well; and how are these three organs to govern all the rest? He saw there could be no government without a will; he therefore set his "board of control" to work, and they actually make a will, or, as he terms it, "produce a will;" and by means of this will of their own production, these material organs "observe, compare, and control the other faculties." Here we learn that three bits of matter produce a bit of a soul—a will! We have now got into the arcana of this most sublime science. This, sir, is the philosophy of mind! We are not informed whether this will, produced by the board of control, is to control the board, or to be controlled by it; and my organ of ideality is not sufficiently developed to explain the mystery. But my organ of wonder is powerfully excited, to see this child of three organs raised to the empire of the brain. My head begins to turn giddy.

2. In this affair of the will, a great principle of the science is violated. If this faculty may act upon every part of the brain, then the whole brain is to it but one organ; and I know not why all the other faculties may not enjoy the same privilege. Here all is in danger. 3. If the will act upon all the organs, it must produce manifestations at variance with the natural vigour of the other powers of the mind; and then the indications on the cranium must be all wrong.

4. "When the organ of righteousness," says this scientific gentlemen, "is the dictator, and its dictates acquire supremacy in counselling the will, a moral conscience is established." Here he has obligingly informed us how a conscience is made. It is produced by a piece of dictatorial matter, yeilded by these erudite sons of science, the organ of righteousness. But it depends upon the consent of the newly formed will, whether this wonder-working organ shall complete the manufacture of a conscience or not. If "its dictates acquire supremacy in counselling the will," the thing is soon done; but if this king of the organs should raise another of his subjects to the dignity of chief adviser, — why then the organ of righteousness

must do as well as it can without a conscience; and yet without a conscience, I cannot see how it is possible for righteousness to exist. I do not pretend to be profoundly versed in these mysteries; but it strikes me, that it would be more philosophical for conscience to produce righteousness, than for righteousness to make a conscience. 5. In this business of soul-making, you will perceive, sir, that the powers of the mind are produced by material organs. Three lumps of matter produce a will; and another lump of matter produces a conscience. Thus, according to these phrenologists, the mental faculties spring from material organization; and this is the very dregs of atheism: for if the faculties be produced by the organs, they must perish with them. If this be not stark-staring materialism, I know not what is. Had it not been for the dreadful tendency of the doctrine, I would not have spent a moment upon it. It is a mercy that this, like most German importations, is as silly as it is wicked; so that those who have a moderate share of either brains or grace, are not in much danger from it. I solemnly protest, that in the whole course of my reading, I have never, on any other subject, encountered such a compound of impiety and nonsense.

As to Mr. L., I suspect the *illuminati* will degrade him from their ranks, as a traitor to their cause. He has given up the principle upon which the pretended science is built,—the agreement between the indications on the cranium and the manifestations; for this agreement is what Spurzheim and others continually appeal to as the foundation of their system, as I could show by numerous citations from their writings. What he can learn, after having conceded the main point, by poring over a skull, he has not condescended to inform us; and I have not sagacity enough to divine. What he has said respecting the freedom and spirituality of the soul, has my hearty approval: he has not made a single attempt to show the harmony between these views, and phrenology; and whether this silence be

owing to weakness or wisdom, I am not anxious to inquire.

I am, sir, yours most respectfully,

MENTOR.

HULL, *July 12*, 1828.

LETTER III.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HULL ADVERTISER.

SIR,

I TOOK up my pen with a view to unveil the impiety and absurdities of phrenology. I showed, in my first letter, that it leads to materialism; in my second, that it leads to atheism; and in both, that its inconsistencies as a system furnished ample matter for its refutation. It is said to be built upon facts. After referring to a great number, Dr. Spurzheim says: "All these facts concur in showing the extraordinary energy in any particular faculty invariably to correspond with an extraordinary development in some part of the brain." And Z. affirms, in his letter of May 25th, "Innumerable observations have taught Messrs. Gall and Spurzheim, that the activity of a faculty is proportioned to the size or development of its appropriate organ—a knowledge easily obtained, because the cranium happens to be an exact mould of the brain." Mr. Levison soon learned from Mr. Bromley's letters, that he could not defend these doctrines from the charge of materialism; and therefore he boldly denied them. "When it is stated," says he, in his letter of June 6th, "that the strength and predominance of an intellectual faculty is as the magnitude and development of its organ, it is quite erroneous. Phrenologists never maintain that the size of an organ is a standard of functional power." With the above extracts before

his eyes, the reader, I fear, will be at a loss to know how Mr. L. disposed of his modesty, when he affirmed that phrenologists never held the doctrine in question. In his steam engine illustration, in reply to my first letter, Mr. L. admits that one man's faculties may possess more than twice the power of those of another, owing to a difference of temperament merely, the conformation of their heads being supposed to be exactly similar. He admits, also, that a further difference in the strength of the faculties may be occasioned by a difference of education and circumstances. All that Mr. L. contends for is, that "size, considered with all conditions, is not rejected in estimating innate capacity." He was evidently glad to get rid of this subject, and, in his last letter, does not once allude to it. Z. hectors me severely, because I did not explain his doctrine in consistency with Mr. L.'s. I can only say, in reply: 1. How could I divine that Z. would contradict himself, for the sake of agreeing with Mr. L.? 2. I was not aware that it was my duty to harmonize the contradictions of phrenologists; and 3. The task expected from me was really above my powers. My placing the two statements in opposition to each other, he represents as an attempt "to help a lame dog over a stile." I have only to remark on this elegant allusion, that if my dog be lame, his is dead; and that, however desirous he may be to restore it to life again, his surgery does not contain a drug of sufficient potency to work the miracle. Z. makes the concession in so ill a temper, as to show that it is extorted from him; but I will not, on that account, reject it. Be it known, then, that Z. will never again contend that the strength of a faculty is proportioned to the size of its organ. My two opponents have, therefore, bidden Dr. Spurzheim good night; and I am proud of this result of the controversy.

In proof that phrenology does not lead to fatalism, Z. says, "There can be no doubt, that if man was a mere bundle of instincts and sentiments, the stronger would prevail, and his actions would be irresistible:

but the addition to these parts of his nature of the faculties intellectual, of which reason (causality) is chief, enables him to distinguish and choose between good and evil ; and a slender modicum of intellect is sufficient for the purpose. . . . Reason may convince him of the importance of benevolent actions, and he may do them ; but the motive may be anything but inclination. In matters of this kind, some act from principle, others from feeling." What Z. means by a bundle of instincts and sentiments is above my comprehension. In this extract, he steers clear of materialism, but he wrecks his system. 1. Reason is represented as producing all the charity which a case can deserve, when there is no inclination, no feeling, that is, when the faculty and organ of benevolence are wanting ; for, with these, inclination and feeling are connected. But the highest and noblest act of benevolence is that which proceeds from principle, founded on reason : in comparison of this, that which springs from feeling is blind and of little worth. Z. has assigned to reason the organ of causality. Here, sir, you have the function of a large benevolence, (for a large benevolence is reasonable,) performed by the faculty of reason, through the organ of causality—the appropriate faculty and organ having no place in the head. A more complete refutation of the system need not be desired. 2. The observations made by Z. on benevolence, will equally apply to every other faculty with the function of which reason can be at all concerned ; and as Z. has confined reason to the organ of causality, everything that is reasonable may be done by means of this organ, quite as well without the other faculties and organs as with them. Suppose a man to have no organ of righteousness, and a large organ of covetousness, his organization would make him a villain, if his reason did not interpose : but, according to Z., he may be just from principle ; and then the manifestations will be in direct contradiction to the phrenological indications. It is also reasonable that men should be pious : when the organ of veneration, there-

fore, is deficient, they may be devout from principle. But if men may be charitable, just, and religious, without the organs of benevolence, conscientiousness, and veneration, phrenology does not deserve to be called a cunningly devised fable, for it is the most clumsy imposture ever obtruded upon human credulity. Reason ought to regulate adhesiveness, combativeness, destructiveness, covetousness, secretiveness, self-esteem, love of approbation, cautiousness, hope, firmness, etc.; and what reason dictates, according to Z., may be done. In reasonable persons, therefore, the manifestations will be the same, whatever may be the size of the organs: if they be too large, causality will restrain them; if too small, causality will supply the deficiency. And let no one suppose that a large causality is necessary to produce these reasonable manifestations; for Z. has assured us that "a slender modicum of intellect is sufficient for the purpose." A very small organ will serve for a weak faculty. You cannot, therefore, guess whether a subject will act rationally or not, by looking at the organ of causality; for since a small one is sufficient, size is of no more importance in this regulating organ than in those under its control: the result may be the same, whether it be a dwarf, or a giant. If the science, therefore, be built on the invariable correspondence observed between the vigour manifested by the faculties and the size of the organs, it is founded on fools; for Z. grants that this correspondence may be deranged by every one who has "a slender modicum of intellect." 3. You will perceive, sir, the absurdity of making one organ do the work which properly belongs to another; causality is to perform the function of benevolence, etc. This throws all into confusion, and is not only fatal to phrenology, but contrary to nature; for the eye cannot hear sounds, nor the palate see objects. 4. As Z. has located reason, he should have informed us how it can control the other organs. Reason, it seems, can only act by means of the organ of causality; if so, it can no more check the other organs than the nose can stop the ears.

I inquired, in my first letter, why the phrenologists had not provided a particular organ for the use of reason. In reply, Z. rates me most unmercifully for not knowing, what "even an elementary in phrenology" would have explained to me, "that reason, like the other intellectual faculties, has a local habitation and a name." "In the language of the science," he says, "it is termed causality." In proof of this, he refers to Spurzheim, who, speaking of individuality, comparison, and causality, says, "These three faculties together form systems, etc., and constitute the true philosophical understanding." I am not sure that, by the "true philosophical understanding," Spurzheim means exactly what Z. does by reason. If no one can possess reason without having a true philosophical understanding, I tremble for Z. But, admitting their identity, why does not Z. quote fairly? Spurzheim says, "these three faculties;" Z. leaves out the word three. Had the citation been correct, the reader would have seen, at once, what a singular authority Spurzheim is for limiting reason to one organ! Let us hear what Mr. Levison has to say upon a subject so plain that no one, who has read "even an elementary in phrenology," can make a mistake. "The organs of causality and comparison, with the perceptive faculties, produce reason!" This is very much like the atheistic nonsense quoted from Forster, in my last! Mr. L. will surely allow reason the use of the two organs, which contribute so essentially to its existence! Reason, then, has one organ, according to Z.; two organs, according to Mr. L.; and three organs, according to Dr. Spurzheim! This is building science upon facts! and improving upon the inductive and experimental philosophy of Bacon and Newton!

Mr. L. professes to answer my last; but what has he really done? Has he attempted to show that phrenology does not lead to materialism? Does he controvert anything I said respecting the doctrine of the isolation and independency of the organs, as leading to atheism? and does he protest against the conduct of the philoso-

phical Mr. Forster, in manufacturing a soul by piecemeal out of material organs, as not having the sanction of phrenological principles? Not one word does he utter upon any of these topics. I have a right, therefore, to assume, that the materialism and atheism of the system are established. He has, however, noticed one observation of mine, on a minor point, and plumes himself much on the exposure of my supposed ignorance. I had said, "An organ may be diseased; but in the living subject this cannot always be discovered." Upon this he remarks, that "a physician can discriminate, by the aid of symptoms, whether his patient has a chronic or acute affection of the brain — whether in the whole or a separate part." I never doubted that physicians may, in most cases, judge correctly from symptoms respecting diseases of the brain; but I was not before aware, that they could always detect local affections, and determine precisely the nature of the complaint, and how far it had spread, without actual inspection. Phrenologists divide the brain into thirty-three parts. They assert that one of these parts, called an organ, may be diseased, while all the adjoining organs are in a sound and healthy state. Now, if Mr. L. means to say, that a physician can always discover, in the living subject, when a portion of the brain is diseased, and fix upon the particular organ, I can only exclaim, in his own words, "Most sagacious pathologist! — thanks to thee for thy discovery!" His reference to the liver, kidneys, and lungs, is not in point, because these viscera are not each divided into more than thirty parts. If they were, and if any one of these parts might be separately the subject of disease, Mr. L. would be entitled to a diploma, if he could always not only find out the nature of the complaint, but determine exactly which of the thirty-three parts was affected.

In taking leave, Mr. L. invites me to publish a pamphlet, with an assurance that it shall be answered. This reminds me of the wish of Job: "My desire is that mine adversary had written a book." At present,

however, I hope he will excuse me. If he be disposed to try his skill at book-making, he will find enough in my letters yet unanswered to furnish matter for a fashionable quarto. I wish Z. had retired from the contest in the same friendly spirit. My efforts have been directed against the system, on account of its immoral tendency, and not against the persons of its supporters: towards them I indulge no feelings of an unkindly nature. The invectives of Z. against fanatics, as he styles his opponents, remind me of the bluster of the Welch quack: "Me vill kill de priest." Most people are of opinion, that a polemic never loses his temper, till he is at a loss for an argument. Begging pardon for trespassing at such length upon your patience, and upon the columns of your very valuable paper,

I remain, sir, yours most respectfully,

MENTOR.

HULL, *August 25, 1828.*

LETTER IV.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HULL ADVERTISER.

SIR,

IN my last, I complained of Z. not quoting fairly. The copy of Spurzheim which I consulted, was the first edition; and in this I am quite sure he says, "these three faculties." Z. refers to the third edition, and says, "The words of Dr. Spurzheim are 'these faculties,' and not 'these three faculties.'" It may be so; but as Z. seems to doubt the correctness of my quotation, I refer him, and any gentleman who may wish to ascertain the truth, to the copy in the Subscription Library, Parliament-street, where, under the article causality, page 460, he will find the passage as I

cited it. The fact is, it seems, that the editions vary. When the first came out, three faculties constituted the philosophical understanding; it has since been discovered that not less than four are required. In the progress of illumination, it will perhaps turn out, that three or four faculties only make a sophist, and that half a dozen, or half a score are necessary to produce a philosopher. If it be thought that I should have consulted the last edition, because it often happens that in a new edition the mistakes of the former are corrected, I beg leave to state, that the question at issue, between me and Z. was, whether phrenologists had assigned any organ to reason. He affirmed that, "if Mentor had read even an elementary on phrenology, he would have discovered that reason, like the other intellectual faculties, has a local habitation and a name." This, therefore, according to Z., was a point so well established, that phrenologists were all agreed upon it; any elementary work would have given me correct information. He then appealed to Spurzheim. I turned to the place and found the word three in my copy, which was omitted in Z.'s extract. As Z. had spoken so positively about this being a settled point, I never suspected the apostle of the sect had contradicted himself upon it, in the different editions of his work. The science is said to be built upon facts; and I really was not able to divine, that if three faculties could constitute a philosophical understanding yesterday, it would require four to do the same thing to-day! If Z. however, will forgive me for not being more sceptical in this instance, I promise him faithfully, that I will never again give a phrenologist credit for not contradicting himself in things said to be established. In matters of opinion, a person may change; but in the case of an ascertained fact, he cannot. If I take up an old edition of Euclid, and read, that "the three angles of every triangle, are equal to two right angles;" I do not expect to find in a subsequent edition, that "the four angles of a parallelogram are equal to two right angles!"

Z. has again adverted to the temperaments, unluckily started by Mr. Levison, and wishes to persuade us that they do not present any formidable difficulty. But he should have recollected that Mr. L. united with them, all other conditions, in forming his estimate of the powers of the mind. I pointed out several conditions that cannot be taken into the account, which neither he nor Z. has answered. I will now mention another condition, which will elude all their calculations; and that is, the operation of the Holy Spirit on the human mind. Nearly all who profess christianity in this country, both churchmen and dissenters, believe in the doctrine of divine influence; and no doctrine is more clearly revealed in the Bible. Through this influence, the animal propensities are restrained, and virtuous sentiments acquire predominance; so that a person who neither feared God, nor regarded man before he received this heavenly gift, is by it made both pious and virtuous. If the manifestations therefore, prior to conversion, were in unison with the phrenological indications, they cannot be so after; because a thorough change has taken place in the propensities and moral sentiments, while the structure of the skull remains unaltered. But if the doctrine in question be denied, the fact is indisputable, that a change of character is often effected, whatever may be the cause, and that this change is utterly inexplicable upon phrenological principles. It is also a fact, that "a righteous man" sometimes "turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them." In this case, prior to apostacy, veneration and conscientiousness prevailed against the animal propensities; afterwards these become lords of the ascendant, and the others cease to act. Here the organs of veneration and conscientiousness had been fully developed, and in triumphant operation for years; and if there were a particle of truth in phrenology, they would have ensured a steady perseverance in piety and virtue to the end. Instead of this, the worshipper has turned blasphemer, and the honest man a villain. The

organs, as indicated on the skull, have meantime, undergone no change whatever. How is this? Will a phrenologist say, that the full organs of veneration and conscientiousness are paralysed by disease. No; the disease is not in the head, but in the heart. But if the change in the character be owing to diseased organs, the apostate is not responsible for his vices; for he cannot continue virtuous after the appropriate organs are dead: thus the wicked are justified. If these organs remain in a sound state after they cease to act, then the manifestations and indications are in perfect contradiction, and phrenology is destroyed. What can exceed the infatuation of making the skull, which exhibits the same appearances from youth to old age, the index of the propensities and sentiments, which are varying perpetually. To support the credit of the science, there ought to be elevations or depressions of bumps corresponding to every change of character.

Z. had admitted, in a former letter, that, but for the interposition of reason, the tendency of his system to materialism could not be denied. It is a principle of phrenology, that no mental faculty can act but by some material organ. I knew Z. would be fast with his reason, because he could not make it work without an organ, nor help his system if he united it to one. In the latter case, reason could only ride his own horse, like each of the other faculties, and could exercise no authority over the other parts of the brain. In answer to my inquiries, Z. affected surprise at my ignorance, and in a most confident tone assured me, that any elementary work would have informed me that a pair of organs, called causality, form the local habitation which, in the science, is assigned to reason. He even expressed a hope, as he found me to be so perfectly unacquainted with the subject, that I would read, at least, a half-crown pamphlet on this sublime science. If he meant a pamphlet worth half-a-crown, I frankly tell him that my eyes have never yet pored over its pages. Your readers will be able to judge whether I

have read enough to qualify me to overturn the system. He denies that he introduced the passage from Spurzheim as his authority for identifying reason with causality; and, as he refers to no other writer, his bold assertion has nothing to support it. It was rather unkind of Z., knowing, as he did, my extreme ignorance, that in his last letter, especially, he would not inform me in what elementary work I might have found out the secret.

Having fixed upon the organs of reason, the next point of inquiry was, whether this faculty be subject to the general law of the system, and exert a vigour proportioned to the size of its organs. If this were granted, Z. saw plainly enough that he could not evade the charge of materialism: he therefore endowed reason with a power of performing, from principle, all the functions which properly belonged to some other faculties, when they should happen to be deficient; and affirmed, that a slender modicum of intellect was sufficient for the purpose. This was steering clear of materialism; but, as I showed in my last, was fatal to his favourite science. But he has cited no authority for these singular opinions; and, with regard to a small causality performing such wonders, Coombe, in his *System*, page 347, is directly against him. "When a person," says he, "possessing little causality, endeavours to reason, he will become feeble and confused." I am really surprised that Z. should entertain fears of my denying that persons sometimes perform acts from principle, when the inclination is wanting. "Whether Mentor deny it or not," he remarks, "the fact is incontrovertible, that similar actions spring from contrary motives; and what people cannot do from inclination, they do from principle." I deny the fact! when on the ground of it, in my last, I cut up the system root and branch! I shall beg leave to go a little further. If a person commence a course of benevolence from principle, without feeling or inclination; when he has acquired the habit, that will give the inclination, and produce a highly pleasurable feeling.

To deny this would be to deny experience, and to deprive virtue of its chief reward in this world. Here, then, is a person without any primitive feeling, or faculty of benevolence ; and, therefore, without the appropriate pair of organs, who acquires the feeling. But how will a phrenologist dispose of it? There is no organ of benevolence. Must it be attached to the organ of causality, along with the principle? This would spoil all.

I have assailed the absurdities and impieties of phrenology with a combination of argument and wit, and, I think, with some success ; for it is not usual for men to cry aloud at the bite of a flea. I have, however, carefully avoided all personalities ; and Z. is my witness, though in this he does not follow my example, that here I am guiltless ; for, in his catalogue of my expressions to which he objects, there is not one which is applied either to him or any other individual. If any apology were necessary for my style of writing, it may be found in the nature of the subject. I can be grave in the discussion of grave questions ; but really, sir, to encounter phrenology with a serious countenance, exceeds all power of face. Be this, however, as it may, I feel persuaded that an argument pointed with a little wit is best adapted to counteract the mischievous tendency of the system. I do not consider any part of it more ridiculous, or more dangerous, than the leading position upon which the science rests—that the extraordinary size of an organ is a sign of extraordinary vigour in the faculty. All analogy would lead to a contrary conclusion. The legs are the organs by which we walk ; and when each of these is as thick as the body, you naturally suppose that the walking faculty is feeble : you do not expect to see the poor squalid creature hobble on with his pair of churns at the rate of five miles an hour !

I remain, sir, yours most respectfully,

MENTOR.

HULL, *Sept.* 9, 1828.

REVIEWS.



REVIEWS.

REVIEW I.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE METHODIST MAGAZINE.

SIR,

THE attack of the Edinburgh Reviewers upon Methodism and Missions, was replied to by a Mr. Stiles, a dissenting minister; and the castigation they have received from him, has provoked their ire to an uncommon degree. They objected to Methodism, that it produced madness; and we must do them the justice to say, that, in their critique upon Mr. Stiles's book, they have completely substantiated this charge; for they come out of his hands with the laugh, stare, and rage of Bedlamites. I have not seen Mr. S.'s book; but, judging of it by its effects, it must be a masterly performance; he has driven his opponents to the dreadful expedient of substituting abuse in the stead of argument, which is the last resource, and the forlorn hope, of vanquished fanatics. The spirit in which they write, renders it improper to enter any further into controversy with them; for who but a maniac would dispute with maniacs? Yet this celebrated critique contains such ample matter for observation and reflection, that a few remarks upon it may not be amiss. Under the term "Methodists," you will recollect they include evangelical churchmen and dissenters, and the followers of the late Mr. Wesley.

Mr. Stiles is termed, "the sacred and silly gentleman." "His catechism," they inform us, "is very

simple. In what hoy do you navigate? By what shoemaker or carpenter are you instructed? What miracles have you to relate?" etc. Methodist preachers are called "Didactic artizans—delirious mechanics—ferocious Methodists." They add, "It is scarcely possible to reduce the drunken declamations of Methodism to a point, to grasp the wriggling lubricity of these cunning animals, and to fix them in one position."

They assure us that "if they can prevent such an evil, it (that is, sober and rational christianity) shall not be eaten up by the nasty and numerous vermin of Methodism. Mr. John Stiles should remember that it is not the practice with destroyers of vermin to allow the little victims a *veto* upon the weapons used against them. If this were otherwise, we should have one set of vermin banishing small tooth combs; another protesting against mouse traps; a third prohibiting the finger and thumb; and a fourth exclaiming against the intolerable infamy of using soap and water. It is impossible, however, to listen to such pleas. They must all be caught, killed, and cracked, in the manner, and by the instruments which are found most efficacious to their destruction; and the more they cry out, the greater plainly is the skill used against them."

The following reasons are given why the Hindoos should be neither civilized nor christianized. "Make the Hindoos enterprising, active, and reasonable as yourselves, destroy the eternal track in which they have moved for ages, and in a moment they would sweep you off the face of the earth. Let us ask, too, if the Bible is universally diffused in Hindostan, what must be the astonishment of the natives to find that we are forbidden to rob, murder, and steal; we who, in fifty years, have extended our empire from a few acres about Madras over the whole peninsula, and sixty millions of people, and exemplified in our public conduct, every crime of which human nature is capable. What matchless impudence to follow up such practice with such precepts! If we have common prudence,

let us keep the gospel at home, and tell them that Machiavel is our prophet, and the god of the Manicheans our god.”*

The whole critique runs on in the same strain of malignant fury against Methodism and Missions. After reading the above, it is difficult to conceive otherwise of the writer than as in a state of derangement, lost in dirt, and eaten up with vermin. It is the current report, however, that we are beholden for this critique to a clergyman of the church of England. One periodical publication hints at this rather obscurely; another, which is conducted by clergymen, speaks out pretty plainly. He takes his rank, of course, among the rational divines, and has lately obtruded upon the world two volumes of sermons full of rank Socinianism.

The connexions of this gentleman in the north have obliged him most probably, to use pretty freely the small tooth comb, the finger and thumb, and soap and water; and this employment would naturally enough suggest to him the sublime imagery which he employs to show the necessity of killing the Methodists. Or he may, perhaps, assist the nursery maid in combing and washing “the children of the foundling.”

It may not be amiss to remind those clergymen, who, like this man, would have “the numerous vermin of Methodism caught and killed,” that they are hired by the state, at an enormous expense, not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. If they can reclaim the wanderer, and preserve the pious, they ought surely to be satisfied; but if they can do neither, and, therefore, recommend prosecution, they ought, as honest men, to resign their livings at the time they propose coercive measures. Why should they be paid any longer for preaching and praying against heresy, schism, etc., when, by their own confession, these evils can be removed only by catching and killing! But they wish to have associated with them, in their godly work, a number of

* Edinburgh Review, No. 27, Art. 3.

consecrated butchers, clothed in red apparel, and in garments died with blood ; and then their arguments, to be sure, would be irresistible ! If Methodism be, however, what they say it is, the clergyman who cannot stop its progress without catching and killing, ought to be kicked out of the church, and to have his gown torn off his back.

Several of the writers in the *Edinburgh Review* are men of considerable talent. This made the work popular ; and it obtained a very extensive circulation. Presuming upon the hold which they had acquired on the public mind, they have lately ventured to propagate tenets which it would have been imprudent to have divulged before the reputation of their work was established. It is rather remarkable, that in the very article which follows their first attack upon the Methodists, the sanctity of the Bible is treated with as little ceremony as the sanctity of Methodism ; and I have sometimes smiled to myself while thinking how the countenance of many a zealous churchman would change, when, after such a feast upon Methodism, he was invited to finish the repast with a noxious draught of infidelity. Soon after this comes out a most vulgar attack upon royalty and the constitution.* The falling off of several hundreds of subscribers, as I have been credibly informed, has been the consequence of the publication of these principles.

These reviewers are of the French school, and attack religion and government with the weapons which were employed so successfully by the French philosophers. But the English are neither so volatile, so ignorant, nor so profane as the French : they are not to be duped out of all that is dear to them by the jests and abuse of a motley group of infidels, jacobins, and unprincipled clergymen.

The character of a censor is a matter of importance. When a person of known wisdom and goodness gives

* See Wharton's "Remarks on the Jacobinical Tendency of the *Edinburgh Review*."

reproof, it is generally suspected there is something the matter; but who thinks the worse of a man for the abuse of a Billingsgate? We know enough of the writer of this article against Methodism. He makes a profession of christianity, and is bound by every sentiment of honour and conscience to support government; but he is paid by infidels and jacobins to keep up the credit of a work which tends to subvert both. He subscribes to the doctrines of the church of England, and is handsomely paid to preach them; and he both preaches and writes against them. It would have been singular, if this hireling could have perceived any other than mercenary motives as the spring of action in Methodist preachers. It is not the reproaches, but the commendations of such men that should excite alarm.

If it were not for the wickedness of it, I would advise all the sober and rational clergy to speak of the Methodists with all the extravagance of this writer. Those of their hearers who believe them, will go to the meeting for sport; and those who doubt, will attend a few times, to know whether these things are so. There are thousands now in the Methodist societies, who heard the preachers at first from such motives.

It is impossible for thinking people to believe the statements of these men. The church of England, they say, is the most pure and apostolic church in Christendom: the clergy are the most pious, learned, orthodox, and rational divines that ever adorned the church of Christ, in any age. Now we reasonably suppose that a church built upon a good foundation, and supported by 18,000 such clergy, may bid defiance to the whole world. When, therefore, we hear an alarm sounding through the kingdom, that this church is in danger, we inquire with surprise, what sacriligious desperadoes have attacked this venerable fabric, and produced this universal panic? and we are very gravely told, that they are a few shoemakers and carpenters! and that "they must all be caught and killed," or this wonderful church will be ruined! A sober and rational di-

vine has been preaching and praying for years, and made all his parishioners sober and rational christians, when a "didactic artizan" appears. His catechism is very simple. "In what hoy do you navigate? By what shoemaker or carpenter are you instructed? What miracles have you to relate?" etc. His work is soon done: they all jump into the Methodist hoy, and sail away, leaving their sobriety and rationality with the poor parson, who roars out most piteously, "The church is in danger!"

D. I.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

REVIEW II.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE METHODIST MAGAZINE.

SIR,

It is only occasionally that I see the Anti-Jacobin Review, but being informed that a recent number contained some strictures on Mr. Everett's reply to Mr. Wainwright's objections, my curiosity was not a little excited to know what censure the bigoted authors of that publication had to pass on Mr. E.'s excellent letters. A friend having just procured me a sight of that Review, and perceiving by your number for this month, that you have not received any article on the subject from your numerous correspondents, I presume to send you the following brief remarks, which you are at liberty to dispose of as you may judge best.

Yours affectionately,

YORK, *Dec.* 8, 1819.

The strictures referred to are found in the September number, and it is worthy of observation, that the

tone of these writers is, on the present occasion, considerably lowered, compared with what it has been on the subject of Methodism. It is true, they are not yet very sparing in the use of such stale terms as schism, heresy, and enthusiasm; and have not forgotten their accustomed practice of hazarding assertions without proof. They have evidently, however, received Mr. E.'s letters under the feeling, that he is a writer not to be treated with that low vulgarity and contempt, which they have long been habituated to employ. It is now, it appears, a piece of Methodistical policy, "On every attack, to appoint some able hand or other to give it an answer." These gentlemen at last concede, that the Methodists have some "able hands" to employ in their defence. You, sir, can recollect the period, when anything issuing from the schismatical press was stigmatised as the production of ignorance and presumption. Mr. E. will not, I hope, be too much elated with this extorted concession: their praise with him will have its price. But who appointed Mr. E. to undertake the task he has so ably executed? I am inclined to conclude these writers will find, on inquiry, that in the castigation he has given Mr. Wainwright, he was really, what they affirm of all Methodist preachers, in reference to the ministry, self-appointed; with only the exception of a simple request from yourself.

The Methodists, these critics truly affirm, "contend that Methodism is the work of God, and that John Wesley was a peculiar instrument in the hands of Providence to accomplish it." This they attempt to disprove, by declaring, that during Mr. Wesley's career, "he very materially altered his opinions." The Methodists deny this, and challenge them to the proof. It is truly lamentable, that churchmen either forget, or wilfully depart from what in early life they were taught to be their "duty to their neighbours; namely, to hurt no body by word or deed," and to keep themselves "from evil speaking, lying, and slandering." If such versatility of opinion had been

manifested by the venerable founder of Methodism, it would certainly appear in some of his numerous publications; but, on the contrary, it is easy to show, that in all the essential truths of religion, as he "received Christ Jesus the Lord, so he walked in him" to the end of life.

These gentlemen, I beg pardon sir, these reviewers, boast that "an able advocate for the church, puts the Methodists in a dilemma very similar to that in which our Lord put the Jews. The mission of John Wesley, 'was it of God, or of man?'" It is scarcely necessary to remark, that the Methodists are by no means afraid of being placed in this dilemma. But if an able advocate for the church has it in his power to put them there, why does he not do so? Is it because the church cannot produce such an able advocate? What! not one from the host of Anti-Jacobin reviewers? So we must conclude, until some such advocate proves the thing, Methodism is not of God. The fact is, many who stickle for the church, are unworthy of her communion. She is placed, in their hands, on a false basis. Mr. Wainewright himself, from his subsequent silence, seems afraid to enter the field with Mr. E.; and his warm admirers, the Anti-Jacobin reviewers, endeavour to make as honourable a retreat for him as existing circumstances will admit of.

In the same paragraph, containing these "great swelling words," the Methodists are charged with departing from the advice Mr. Wesley gave them to the last, not to separate from the church. Mr. Wesley was warmly attached to the doctrines of the church of England; and though he disapproved of, and dissented from many parts of her discipline, he never formally renounced communion with her, nor departed from her, further than existing circumstances appeared to him imperiously to require.* His successors in the work have been guided by the same principles; and

* Here Mr. Isaac proceeds too far; Mr. Wesley never disapproved of and dissented from the discipline of the church of England, but disapproved of all departure from what discipline she has. — EDIT.

in the application of them, they are not aware that they have materially erred. Let the objector state his case, and it shall be considered.

After a few other cursory remarks, in which Mr. Everett's sentiments are objected to, but not refuted, these critics say, "We shall confine ourselves to two or three points only, as most requisite of explanation." The first of these points is the doctrine of assurance. Mr. E. had observed, "What is not a little singular, Mr. Wainwright encourages his readers, in one part of his publication, to pray for pardon, and yet renounces any knowledge of its attainment. Hence we must pray in the dark. If we cannot tell when we are forgiven, there will be a danger of our praying for what, unknown to ourselves, we may have already obtained." On this passage, the reviewers remark, "We have always understood that daily pardon is necessary to every man, and have learnt to pray that our trespasses may be forgiven as often as we pray for our daily bread. If Mr. Everett and his followers suppose themselves arrived at that state that they need not pray for pardon, as being already obtained, we must consider them deluded by one of the false spirits which have gone out into the world." This is all they have said upon the subject. Permit me to add the following observations:—

First: Mr. Everett's argument is not directly met, but an absurd consequence is tacked to it. It is easy, however, to show, that the consequence does not belong to it. If I am quite satisfied that, yesterday, all my sins were forgiven, is that any reason why I should not pray to-day for the pardon of sins subsequently committed? How the knowledge that God pardons our daily faults, on our performance of certain conditions, of which daily prayer is one, is likely to inspire conceit that we "need not pray for pardon," is above my comprehension. It seems to me that such a view of the subject is one of the greatest encouragements to prayer that can be afforded. Secondly: if I might be so presumptuous, I should like to catechise these critics

a little, about their daily prayers. I would ask, if you have no assurance that God will answer prayer, why do you pray? In your daily prayers, do you supplicate pardon for any other sins than those of the current day? If not, you ought to have an assurance that your former sins are forgiven, or you are still in your own apprehension liable to be punished for them. If you pray daily for the pardon of all the sins of your past life, are you not in Mr. E.'s dilemma, praying in the dark, and possibly praying for what you have already received; that is, provided it be true, that a man may be in the favour of God, but cannot know it? Thirdly, those who deny the knowledge of forgiveness, virtually make the gospel of no use. Most persons will allow, that the terms of pardon are laid down in the New Testament; and it seems necessarily to follow, that a person has only to comply with these terms, to be assured that he is forgiven. If, then, I cannot have a knowledge of pardon, it must be because the scriptures do not inform me what I must do to be saved; and if they do not give me this information, of what value are they? Fourthly, if we can have no consciousness of divine mercy, we cannot be grateful for it: thus all the best feelings of the soul are paralyzed. Fifthly: a person who is conscious of sin, and has no satisfactory evidence of forgiveness, must be in a very uncomfortable state. What, then, must be the assurance of our opponents, who deny this doctrine, and are yet perpetually charging Methodism with being a gloomy system? And can a man look forward without dismay, who, like these critics, disclaims all saving knowledge? It is their system, not ours, which is likely to people Bedlam. Not anything, sir, I trust, in what is here advanced, can possibly operate against the christian looking back upon the whole of his past life, and that frequently too, with all the tempers, words, and actions, the design and desires, the intentions and affections of it, and to confess all that he may know to have been improper therein, supplicating a continued sense of the pardoning love of God. For our pardon, though

really granted, may be revoked through our unfaithfulness; and though a sense of it excludes all conscious guilt, yet it is not intended to preclude holy shame, and the deepest self-abasement before the Lord, from a recollection of past transgression. Though the christian is forgiven of God, he can never forgive himself. He feels more pain for a wandering thought, than some men do for murder; and the smallest departure from God leads him to the throne of grace for a fresh application of pardon. Were Mr. Everett by my elbow, I am inclined to believe that he would not condemn me for charging him with holding similar sentiments to these.

The next point touched upon is that of providence. A long extract is given from Mr. E., in which the views of the Methodists on providence, both general and special, are explained. They observe, "To this account, perhaps, no objection need be made." This is noble; we ask no more from these gentlemen. They carp at some instances provided by Mr. E., as special manifestations, and make some rather singular observations: but since they concede the principle, it is not worth while contending with them about a peculiar application of it. This concession may be viewed as a most important one. It is evidently extorted by the force of truth, and made with hesitation. The reviewers seem to have been afraid fairly to encounter Mr. E.'s arguments; for, to the only extract they have made from this letter, they have given their reluctant approval.

Mr. E.'s letters have been complained of, as too long; and yet some of the complainants, when interrogated, have confessed they never read them. The Letter on Providence, in which he seems to have united all his energies, and borne down upon his opponent like a resistless torrent, devastating and sweeping away his whole system, is really too short, and you rise from it with a wish that he had entered further into the subject. His observations on that abstruse subject are some of them new, and not fre-

quently to be met with; and all of them are striking and interesting. There really seemed to be a want of something written expressly on the subject of providence, by one of our own body, which might be perused without danger. Those composed by some authors of Calvinistic principles, are not fit to be put into the hands of our young people; for, on no doctrinal point is Calvinism more imposing than on this. Many have not been a little shackled in their sentiments by reading Flavel on the subject. Those again, who write on the other side, appear to go too far, by making so much of the agency of second causes, as to lose sight of the first. The first class of writers try all in their power to bring everything under the empire of a dire fatality, and, consequently, to overturn the very foundations of religion and virtue, by destroying moral liberty. The second, among whom Mr. W. seems to take his stand, by banishing the immediate intercourse of the Deity with his creatures, and by denying his divine interpositions to assist them, cut up by the roots all dependence upon God, and render prayer useless and absurd. Mr. E. has judiciously and scripturally steered his course between these extremes; and while he maintains the moral liberty of man, he takes care to lay every honour at the feet of his Redeemer. To say nothing of the excellent light in which he has placed several other subjects, forming, according to your own language at the last Bristol Conference, "a most excellent defence of scriptural christianity," the Letter on Providence alone, justifies a separate publication of the work. A further improvement, perhaps, might be still suggested; namely, to strip that letter of all controversial reference to Mr. Wainewright: for Mr. E. to enter more fully into some particular points, which, evidently from a fear of being too prolix, because of the mode of publication, he has but slightly touched; and, finally, to publish it as a small but separate tract on providence. Such a work is wanted from the pen of one of our own body; and from

the specimens Mr. E. has given us, it would be far from presumptuous in him, at least to attempt the task.

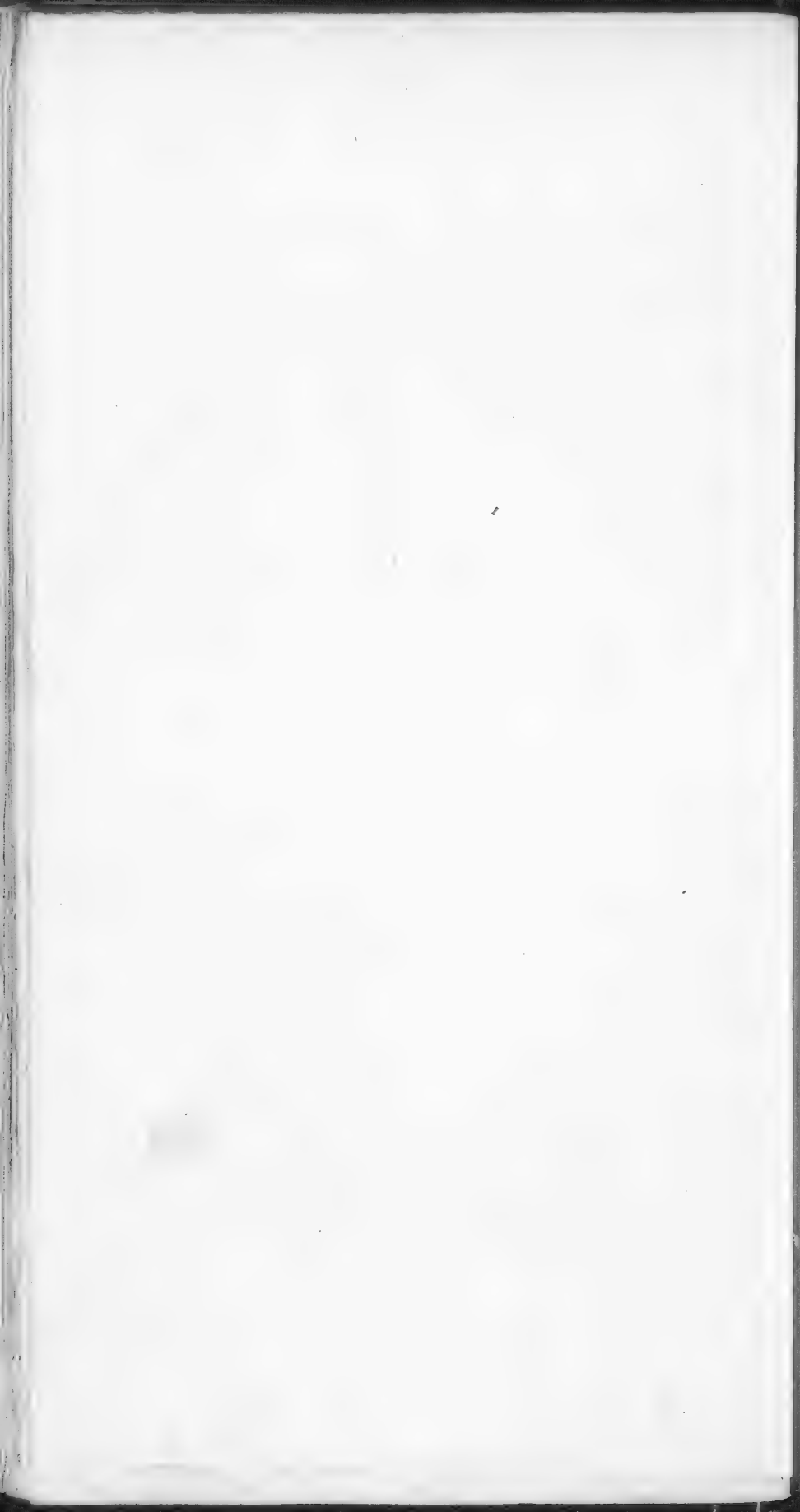
The last point the reviewers advert to, is that of extempore preaching. Mr. E. had supposed that a minister of God might be qualified to deliver his message without the intervention of pen, ink, and paper. "This assumption," we are told, "proves nothing, by proving too much. A flow of impressive language may be found in some teacher or other, of every denomination. In this, the papists have particularly excelled." Who ever denied it? But how does this prove that the true ministers of Christ must be reduced to the expedient of reading their discourses? I should deduce from the fact the direct contrary conclusion. I should say, "If preachers of heresy can vend their poison in a flow of impressive language, how happens it that the ambassadors of Heaven, the ministers of truth and righteousness, must have recourse to artificial helps which the others do not need?" Had Mr. E. represented "a flow of impressive language" as the gift of God to his ministers exclusively, then the reply to him would have been conclusive; but he is guilty of no such absurdity. I will not say, that, when under peculiar circumstances, or when treating on a very complex subject, a minister might not be excused, who should read his discourse; but when we observe how general it is for persons who understand a subject, and feel interested in it, to deliver their sentiments upon it extempore, in a sensible and impressive manner, it is truly wonderful that the clergy should be the only class of men who are generally reduced to the expedient of reading their lectures. These critics affirm, that "many of our best theologians, and most pious christians, cannot deliver a single sentence on the most easy subject with fluency." I hope their possessive pronoun is not intended to include any other church but their own; for I am persuaded it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find an accredited writer belonging to any other sect,

except, perhaps, the Socinians, who would not feel ashamed to make such an avowal.

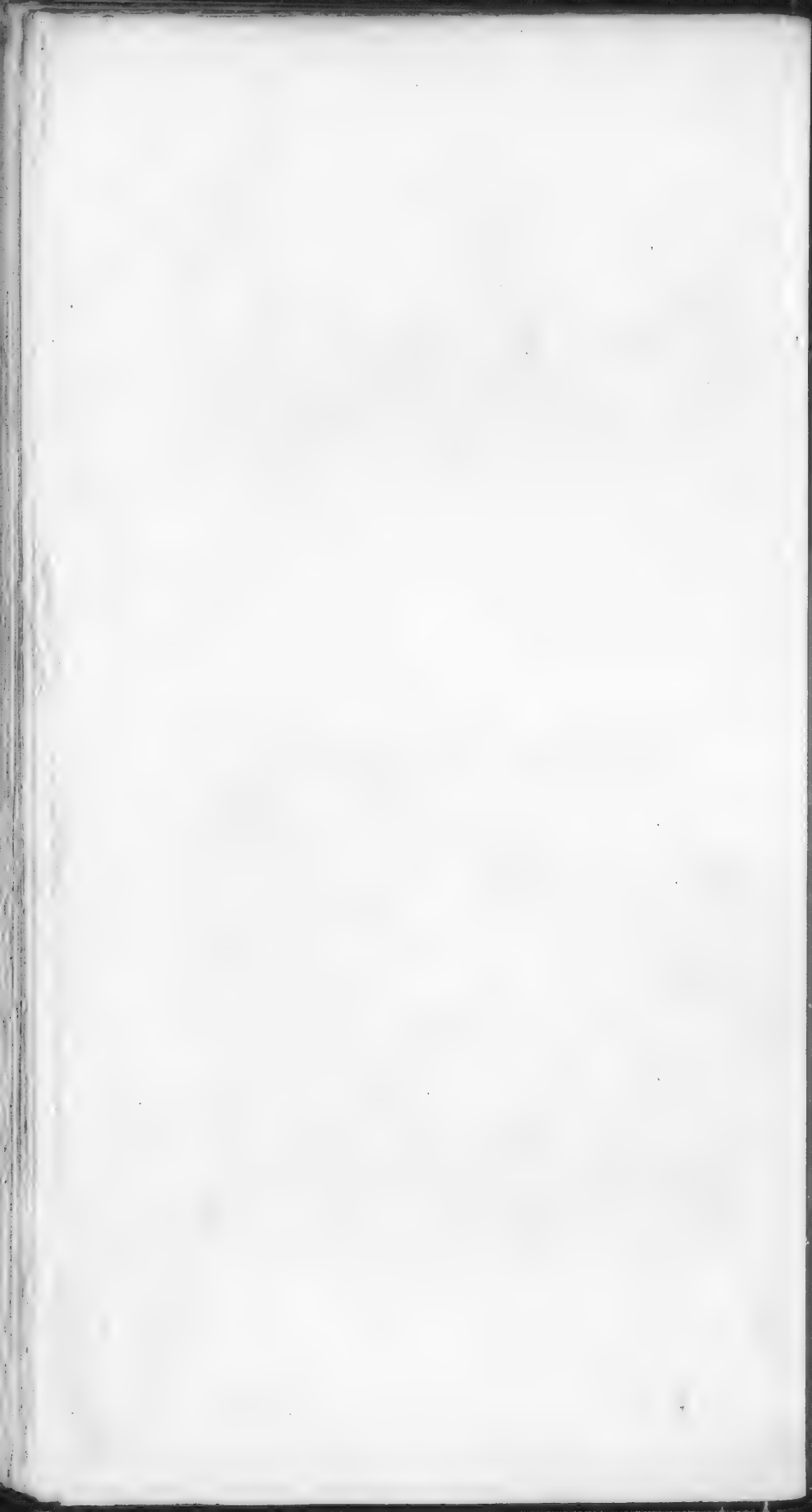
To prove that reading sermons is the preferable mode, it is stated, that "some two or three years ago, one of the popular extempore orators in the church, preached and printed a visitation sermon, which for emptiness, weak arguments, ungrammatical construction, etc., has given a tolerable specimen of what his extemporaneous effusions must be." Now, sir, supposing the character of this sermon to be just, does this writer mean to say, that, if we take two or three years for our range, it would be impossible to find a printed sermon which was written prior to its delivery, that is not as destitute of literary merit as the one to which he alludes? One would hope, when the critic was declaiming against the productions of indigested "extemporaneous effusions," he did not let his pen run on as thoughtlessly as the orators do their tongues. But after giving the following passage the closest attention, it seems to me to furnish as choice a specimen as need to be desired, of emptiness, weak argument, and ungrammatical construction. "As the spirits of the prophets," says he, "are subject to the prophets, it is the business of sound judgment and discrimination of circumstances, to determine whether it is better for preachers, as a general rule, to trust to the effusions of the moment, or to the well-digested labours of the study." Will this censor of sectarian ignorance inform our dull minds what he really means, when he says, "It is the business of discrimination of circumstances to determine" this knotty question? and how he came to know, that an extempore discourse does not contain the well-digested labours of the study?

In conclusion, the critic submits to Mr. E. some important considerations respecting the ecclesiastical establishment, from which, "he will perceive the church of England expanding its wings like a dove, whose wings are silver wings and her feathers like gold. And he may then lay his hand on his mouth, and be

silent through shame." As I have not consulted Mr. E., I know not how this sublime description of the church has operated on his modesty; but as he may read this article, I would say, look, Mr. E., at this dove of the church. See how delightfully many of the clergy brood under her silver wings! and how well they have feathered their nests with her golden feathers! and dare you, presumptuous man, attempt to hurt this divine bird? Were you to inflict a mortal wound from your pop gun, do you suppose the Methodists would be permitted to enrich themselves, by cutting off the silver wings and plucking the golden feathers? Remember the disappointment of the boy, who killed the goose which laid golden eggs, and be instructed!



ESSAY ON ATHEISM.



ESSAY ON ATHEISM.

A PERSON of the name of Ward lent Mr. Isaac Mirabaud's System of Nature, and Volney's Researches after Truth, to convert him to Atheism. Mr. Isaac read them, and determined on writing to the lender a series of letters, exposing the main parts of the atheist's creed. The first letter was sent to Mr. Ward, which so irritated him, as to draw from him an angry reply, which reply gave rise to the following rejoinder, or Essay :—

MR. WARD,

I HAVE not had an opportunity of attending to your reply before this morning. You lent me your books to convert me to your opinions, which I read with attention, particularly Mirabaud's System of Nature. I was not convinced ; and I gave you my reasons for thinking his foundation a sandy one. You seem surprised that I have not entered into a lengthened and laboured proof of the existence of a spiritual being ; but you should recollect that you undertook to bring me over to your views, and that I did not engage to convert you to mine.

The first position of Mirabaud which I controverted is this, that we can only form ideas of material objects. I contended that millions of people have an idea that there is an immaterial being. This I called a plain fact. Against it you argue thus : " There either can or can not be any idea formed of an immaterial being," etc. Though I have read, I believe, some thousands of volumes, I must confess this is the most singular ar-

gument I ever met with. The first proposition in it contains an absolute contradiction; for "something not material" cannot be "nothing." But passing over this absurdity, it takes for granted the main thing in dispute, which you ought to have proved, namely, that what is not material has no existence, or is nothing. Now you really must excuse me, if I cannot so easily concede this point. You must not assume it without one word of proof. The next proposition is, that this immaterial being "never acted on any of the senses." This requires proof, and is only granted for the sake of argument. Admitting it, therefore, I deny the consequence, that we can form no idea of it. The consequence can only be good on the supposition that ideas can only be received through the medium of the senses; and you have the honour, I believe, of having made this wonderful discovery. You talk about motion, and, therefore, have some idea of it; but which of your senses has it acted upon? You also mention eternity; now can you see it, or hear it, or smell it, or taste it, or feel it? All our abstract ideas are received through another medium than the senses. If you have no idea of a spiritual being, you cannot argue either for or against his existence.

In your next paragraph you assert that "neither the millions nor yourself can seriously say you have an idea of such a being as you preach," etc. Here is another downright contradiction. For how is it possible to "feign a being in the mind," and yet to have "no idea of such a being?" Besides, if I have feigned such a being in my mind, I did not receive my notion of him through the medium of my senses.

I can form an idea of an immaterial being, just as easily as you can of one that is material. You can only judge of matter by its properties; and in the same manner I can judge of mind. You know no more of the essence of matter, than I do that of spirit.

The position of your author, that we can only form ideas of material objects, must be true, if there be nothing but matter in the universe, and no innate ideas,

both of which he affirms. For matter can only act on the senses, and, at the most, can only communicate ideas of its own properties. But this is contrary to fact, for we have the idea of a spiritual being. Your author admits this, and you deny it. If you quarrel with your apostle, why must I become his convert? But in trying to frame an argument, you had not sense enough to avoid palpable and absolute contradictions in the terms of it. Your very attempt to prove that there is no spiritual being, is demonstrative evidence that you form some idea of such a being; for it is utterly impossible to affirm or to deny anything of that, of which we have no conception.

I say again, then, how did man come by this idea? I have shown that your author has completely failed in his attempted explanation; and you have neither defended him, nor given another account of the matter. You felt your defeat, but attempted to conceal it by demanding proof of the real existence of a spiritual being. But I must again remind you, that you undertook to convert me to atheism, and not I to demonstrate the existence of God to you. This has been done thousands of times by writers who have not been answered, and cannot be answered. As Locke seems to be an author whom you admire, try your skill upon his argument. But though I did not bring forward all the arguments in favour of the divine existence in a formal way, for a folio would not have sufficed for that purpose, yet I produced one in arguing against the principles of your author, which you have not dared to meet. I took the plain fact admitted by your author, that men have ideas of a spiritual being: I argued that none but a spiritual being could be the author of such an idea. Now when I have proved that a certain effect can only be produced by God, I have proved the existence of God; for that which does not exist cannot be a cause of anything. You could not frame an argument against the existence of the idea; and you could neither defend your author against my exceptions to his explanation, nor give a new one of your own: my argu-

ment, therefore, is untouched; and I defy all the atheists in the world to overturn it.

Though the idea of a spiritual being could only be communicated by himself, yet like all other simple ideas, it is capable of being corrupted by improper associations; but if the revelation be preserved uncorrupted, and we can prove it has, all erroneous notions of him may be corrected by applying to the pure source of information.

But it seems you will believe nothing upon testimony: you must have the evidence of your senses. Do you believe there is such a country as Japan? Did you ever see it, or hear it, or feel it, or taste it, or smell it? Scrutinize testimony as severely as you please; but if you will believe nothing for which you have not the evidence of sense, you are not a man but a brute. Have you the evidence of sense for the eternity of matter and motion?

On the origin of man, you contradict your oracle again. He asserts that man may have always existed. This you deny. It really seems very odd, that you should reckon upon your author converting me, when you do not believe in him yourself. You take your stand, however, on his other position, that "man is an instantaneous production of nature." And yet you are obliged to admit that there is "a want of experience on this head, as applying to man and other large animals." But "universal experience," it seems, "is not against the instantaneous production of lesser animals." The proof is that "Buffon," etc., "inform us," etc. Upon this I remark. 1. You do not assert that these organized beings are living beings. I can produce organized beings without subjecting my materials to the action of the sun's rays. If these were living creatures, there is no proof that they were instantaneous productions, the first of their kind; for we know that by the action of the sun's rays upon eggs, the young are often hatched; but these eggs are the production of other creatures of the same species. Now had your infidel philosophers discovered that there were no eggs in the

portions of matter which they put together? Take your glasses to a large puddle, concentrate the rays of the sun so as to put it in motion, and, if you can, produce a sow, and I will become a convert, and contract to serve the army, navy, etc., with hog's flesh, and shall soon make an ample fortune.

David Hume "by consulting experience and contemplating the universe," could "only find in it" impressions and ideas; and denied that it contained either matter or motion. And yet our naturalists cannot accuse him of having harboured any religious prejudices, which prevented his discovery of truth; for he was as genuine an atheist as any of them.

But what is motion? "Matter has always been in motion, as motion is a consequence of its existence, and existence always supposes properties in the existing body." Motion then, it seems, is a property of matter. But has matter no other property besides motion? We have been accustomed to think that it possesses extension, solidity, figure, etc. How is it then that we can "only find in the universe matter" and one of its properties? You see what philosophic precision and truth there is in the statements of atheists.

What is the cause of motion? "The motion of bodies is a necessary consequence of their essence." I should like to see this proved. "Every being has laws of motion peculiar to itself." What are they? and how did it come by them? "Matter has always been in motion." (Pages 10, 11.) Is this a self-evident proposition? Such jargon as this an atheist can swallow, rather than allow an intelligent cause. Imagine a dialogue between an atheist and a believer.

Atheist. "Action is essential to matter. Matter moves by its own energy." (Page 10.)

Believer. For instance: the bricks and mortar, the timber and slates of this house, all came together by their "own energy," and this comfortable habitation is the result of their necessary motion.

Atheist. "Matter acts on matter. Man is an organ-

ized whole, composed of different matters, which act according to their respective properties." (Page 13.) The energy of this organized piece of matter was sufficient to prepare and combine the materials of which the building is composed.

Believer. But why did not the energy essential to the materials bring them together and combine them? I supposed you were attempting to show that all the motions and combinations of matter may be rationally explained, on the principle of its innate energy, without having recourse to an intelligent cause. Now I am sure you cannot think that organized matter in the shape of human beings, without intelligence, erected this building. By my own energy I can move up hill. Can a stone equal to me in weight, or of my shape and bulk, by "its own energy," keep me company?

Atheist. "The energy of substances depends upon their organization; matter when combined in a certain manner, assumes action, intelligence, and life." (Page 12.)

Believer. You said awhile ago, "that action is essential to matter." Now you tell me that matter assumes action when combined. And it seems that any kind of combination is not sufficient to beget motion; it is only when combined in a certain manner, that it acquires the wonderful property. These two statements involve a contradiction. For if "matter, when combined in a certain manner, assumes action," then it had no action prior to this combination; and, consequently, action is not essential to it. When two statements are contradictory, it often happens that one of them is true; but in this case they are both false. When you said that action is essential to matter, and that matter moves by its own energy, you meant to exclude every cause of motion except matter.

Atheist. Certainly.

Believer. But by an act of the will, I can put my body in motion; and will is not matter.

Atheist. Will is only a property of matter: the result of organization.

Believer. That is more than you, or any man can prove. But let it be a property of what it will, it is not matter ; and yet it is a cause of motion ; for by a mere volition of the will, without any other cause or reason, but just to show that this faculty is sufficient to act on matter and put it in motion, I can give an impulse to my body and run ; I can also check that motion, or continue it a little longer, just as I will. So I can cast a stone into the air if I please. Does that stone move upwards "by its own energy?"

Atheist. Your body gave an impulse to the stone.

Believer. And what cause brought my body into contact with the stone? My will, and nothing else. I could either cast the stone or not, just as I pleased.

Atheist. But your peculiar organization gave a determination to the will.

Believer. No. It was the will that moved the body, not the body the will. But since the will is not matter, if you grant that the body can act upon it, you cannot deny that it may act on the body ; for it must be as easy for an immaterial power to give an impulse to matter, as to receive one from it.

Your other position, that "matter, when combined in a certain manner, assumes action," is a very absurd one. That which is assumed, cannot be eternal. Matter unorganized, or combined in any other than the "certain manner" alluded to, must be without motion ; and, if without motion, it is impossible to combine it in the "certain manner" necessary to its assumption of action. All the matter, therefore, which has not received this peculiar organization from all eternity, must have been forever without motion.

Atheist. By assuming action, I only meant that prior to the assumption it had not an innate power of motion ; but it might be put in motion, and receive the peculiar organization by other bodies.

Believer. In that case it would not assume motion, but only receive it. But if a peculiar organization be necessary to self-motion, it must be remembered that the motion will of necessity alter the organization, and

then this innate property will cease. For motion produces a perpetual transmigration and circulation of the particles of matter, etc., to the end. Now as the organization is perpetually changing, this power of self-motion could not possibly last longer than a moment. But in that short period it would be impossible to give that peculiar organization to another body. But if no body could retain this property for more than a moment, nor could communicate it to another body, then it could not be perpetuated; and, consequently, the power of self-motion must long since have been extinct. But that which has only a momentary existence cannot have been from eternity; there was a past eternity prior to that moment. It follows, therefore, either that matter was created at that moment, in which case it must have had a creator; or else, if it existed from eternity to that moment, without "assuming action," in consequence of not possessing a certain combination; then, since that combination could not be effected without action, nor the action without the combination, there never could have been any motion at all.

Mr. C.* You assign a cause of motion, which is "matter combined in a certain manner;" and your favourite author has conceded that "in attributing the motion of matter to a cause, we must suppose, that matter itself has come into existence.

Atheist. Though the combinations of matter are perpetually changing, yet the self-moving principle, when generated, may exist for a considerable period, the changes produced in organized bodies being slow, their power may act until it is nearly destroyed. In man we see it exist for nearly a century.

Believer. But before you produce man as an example, you should prove that he assumes action. But that is impossible. Let us however examine the hy-

* Who, or what character is assumed under the signature of C., whom we have designated Mr. C. for distinction sake, we cannot tell; we can only guess at it, as Mr. Isaac has given us no clue to guide us.—EDIT.

pothesis, that the self-moving principle might exist in a mass of matter for a hundred, or a million years. In this case you will say it would have time to give the necessary combination to other masses of matter, and thus the principle might be perpetuated. But still these other masses of matter could not be collected and combined without motion communicated to them from some other power. Now they could not assume motion, unless when the foreign power had "combined them in a certain manner," that power were withdrawn, and the machines were left perfectly at rest. Then, when not an atom was stirring in them, and no impulse of any kind given them from without, if they were to begin to move of themselves, they would assume motion. But as this is contrary to all the known laws of motion, we know it is impossible; for whatever secret laws of motion there may be, they cannot contradict those which are known.

Mr. C. But might not a piece of matter, when combined in a certain manner, and set a going by the power which organized it, be able to perpetuate its own motion?

Believer. Yes, if an atheist can prove that he has found out the grand secret which has wearied and distracted so many dolt heads. But the thing is impossible. So much is known of the laws of motion, that none but fools are now puzzling their brain to find out perpetual motion. That self-motion cannot be communicated by matter, no more than it can be assumed, is certain from hence. The atheists grant that no one mass of matter has possessed this power forever; for they say that a peculiar organization is necessary to this power; and that organization is subject to derangement and destruction. But if no one mass of matter has possessed this power from eternity, then all the masses in which it is supposed to have existed have not possessed it from eternity; for it is admitted that each can have possessed but for a finite period; and no number of finites, however great, can make an infinite. There must then have been a period when there was not a

single mass or atom of matter which possessed this self-moving power. From eternity therefore to this period, matter had been without a principle of motion in itself; it must therefore either have derived motion from an infinite Spirit, or been without motion up to that period. If the former, there is a God; if the latter, there never could have been any motion at all. I have taken the more pains to expose this fiction about assuming action, because it is connected with two other assumptions: "Matter when combined in a certain manner, assumes action, intelligence, and life." Assumes intelligence! At the commencement we were told that "by consulting experience and contemplating the universe, we shall only find it matter and motion." Intelligence is neither matter nor motion; where then did our atheist find intelligence? No being can assume or take that which does not exist. Intelligence, therefore, must have had a previous existence, or matter could not possibly have taken it. But if it existed prior to its union with matter, it must have existed in a spiritual substance.

Atheist. I deny the existence of a spiritual substance, or of the existence of intelligence, prior to its union with matter.

Believer. It is easy to deny, but often hard to prove. If, however, intelligence had no previous existence, its production by matter is only another word for creation; for by creation we mean the production of something which had no previous existence.

Atheist. To create is generally understood to produce something out of nothing. In this sense intelligence was not created, for it was produced out of matter.

Believer. And by matter I suppose.

Atheist. Yes,—with the aid of motion.

Believer. And christians, who speak correctly, do not say that matter was produced out of nothing, but out of the infinite mind and by it. You cannot, therefore, do without creation any more than we can. The only question is, which is the most rational account?

Your cause is inadequate to produce the effect. It is utterly impossible that senseless dead matter should produce life and intelligence. Our cause is adequate, as infinite wisdom can do everything which is possible. And that creation is possible, is admitted by both creeds. It is infinitely more rational therefore to believe that mind produced matter, than that matter produced mind.

Mr. C. Is there not a middle course? May not both mind and matter have existed from eternity? This is the creed of some christians. By creation they suppose nothing more is meant than organizing matter and putting it in motion.

Believer. I think substantial reasons have been given for thinking that matter cannot be eternal, but I shall not now enter into the discussion of that point, for admitting the eternity of matter does not lessen but increase the difficulties of atheism.

Mr. C. I think so: for upon this hypothesis I should deny the possibility of creating anything. As I am conscious that I possess life and intelligence, I should infer that these must have been derived from an eternal being.

Mr. D.* You have taken advantage of Mr. Atheist's contradictions about motion. You have well exposed what he says about matter combined in a certain manner assuming motion. But leaving this, I am not quite satisfied with your reply to his other assertions, that motion is essential to matter, and that matter moves by its own energy. You say the will can give an impulse to matter. Granted. But still matter might move, though the will did not act upon it, though it would undoubtedly be in another direction. This proves no more I think than that matter does not move solely by its own energy.

* I imagine that Mr. Isaac adopted the successive letters of the alphabet to represent such difference of sentiment as he found it necessary to introduce into the discussion of the atheistic creed.—
EDIT.

Believer. Suppose matter to have a natural energy of its own, yet if the will can overcome that energy, and give the body a contrary direction, then that energy is not essential to matter ; for whatever is essential to a thing, cannot be separated from it for a moment.

Atheist. The energy might be exerted though the motion were counteracted. "The stones which lie on the ground act upon it by pressure."

Believer. Is motion in any other direction than that which the natural energy of matter would produce, essential to matter ?

Atheist. Certainly not.

Mr. C. It cannot be essential to a stone that I should throw it into the air ; for it would have had as real an existence on the ground, had I let it alone, as it has in the air, when I throw it upwards.

Believer. Very well ; but Mr. Atheist has granted that the natural motion of a stone on the ground is to act upon the ground by pressure. Now I can give that stone a directly contrary motion : I can make it ascend from the ground, which it could not do by its own energy. Here then is an impulse given to matter which suspends for a few moments the motion which it is supposed to be capable of producing by its own energy. This latter motion therefore cannot be essential to matter, or the stone would be annihilated the moment its natural motion was counteracted. And as it is not pretended that any other motion is essential, the conclusion is, that no motion is essential.

Mr. D. But still the stone is in motion, though sometimes by its own supposed energy, and sometimes by an external impulse.

Believer. The question is, whether motion be essential to matter. Now if it be not essential to a stone to move upwards, or downwards, or horizontally, or in any other particular direction ; if it be not essential to it to be in motion from its own supposed energy, nor from foreign stimulus, then it cannot be essential to it to be in motion at all.

What is said of matter moving by its own energy,

is all unsupported hypothesis, and is not true; for if nothing external gave it a particular direction, it could have no tendency in itself to move one way rather than another; and as the disposition to move would be equal in every direction, this would prevent all motion entirely. As, therefore, in fact it has taken a particular direction, this must have been determined by some immaterial cause. If motion were essential to matter, we could not form an idea of it in a state of rest; for we can form no conception of things abstracted from their essential properties. Thus we cannot form an idea of matter without extension; but we can easily abstract from it the idea of motion, and yet have a solid extended substance left.

Mr. C. I am surprised that nothing has been said on the attraction of gravitation, as an ascertained law of motion.

Believer. It cannot be made to square with Mr. Atheist's creed, or we should have had enough of it. That masses of matter mutually attract each other, and that the power of attraction is in proportion to the quantity of matter, etc., are truths which cannot be overturned. If the attracting power be material, as matter cannot act on matter without diminishing its motion, all matter would soon be at rest, if there were not a spiritual power continually renewing the original impulse. And if the attracting power be spiritual, there is an end of atheism.

Mr. D. It seems odd to me that the operation of nature should be carried on with so much regularity, if there were no superintending power.

Atheist. Necessity is the infallible and constant tie of causes to their effects; and this irresistible power, that is universal and necessary, is only a consequence of the nature of things, in virtue of which the whole acts by immutable laws.

Believer. What jargon is this! Necessity is infallible, constant, powerful, irresistible, universal! and it is invested with these attributes by "the nature of things," of which, it seems, it is a "consequence,"

that is, an effect. The first cause, then, is, "the nature of things," and the first effect necessity. This necessity is said to be "the tie of causes and effects." It therefore tied the first cause to itself. It would have looked a little more orderly to have made the first cause do this piece of business! An atheist can swallow all this nonsense, and a great deal more, without a particle of proof. Suppose I deny that universal necessity results from the nature of things, that necessity possesses irresistible power, or any power, that necessity is universal, that the laws of nature are immutable, etc., how can these things be demonstrated? It is utterly impossible.

Mr. D. I should like to hear what Mr. Atheist has to say to the usual argument, that the admirable mechanism of the universe is a proof of the whole system of nature being under the direction of infinite intelligence. The skill of an artist is estimated exactly in proportion as he resembles nature; when the resemblance seems to be exact, the production of art is said to be perfect. No one but an idiot can look at an orrery and suppose either that it never was made, or that it made itself. How is it possible, then, to contemplate the system which it so imperfectly represents, and suppose that intelligence was not employed in its structure? This would be like saying that those things which manifest the least skill must have had a maker, but those which manifest the most exquisite contrivance, are the effects of an unintelligent cause. The painter who produced the bunch of grapes which a bird mistook for the produce of the vine, is said to have attained perfection in his art. Suppose two bunches of grapes placed at a distance from an atheist, one a production of art and the other of nature; suppose him unable to perceive any difference between them; now, how will he make it out that one of these, he knows not which, could not be produced without intelligence, and that the other could not be produced with it? No one could persuade him that the painting was performed by an absolute idiot, who prepared the

pencil, colours, palate, canvass, all himself, and without a single idea of painting, produced this finished picture. And yet he stiffly contends that the other is an effect of an unintelligent cause! They both exhibit the same appearances of skill, but one of them, it seems, could not have been produced without mind, or the other with it.

Believer. I hope Mr. A. will not shrink from this argument. Let him show a watch to a savage, which he has not before seen, and he will at once conclude it to be the work of a skilful artist.

Atheist. As much as this argument has been vaunted, I am not afraid to meet it.

1. "Nature is very powerful and industrious; but we are as little acquainted with the manner in which she forms a stone or a mineral, as a brain organized like that of Newton. Nature can do all things, and the existence of anything proves itself to be one of her productions. Let us not conclude that the works which most astonish us, are not of her production." (Page 33.)

Believer. How do you know that "nature is very powerful and industrious?"

Atheist. I know she is industrious because I see her at work; and I know she is very powerful, because her might is stamped upon her productions.

Believer. And do you not know that she is intelligent, because her works bear as evident marks of skill, as of industry and power? The structure of the eye is a more exquisite piece of mechanism than the finest optical instrument that was ever constructed by human ingenuity. If you, therefore, infer the industry of nature from the number of her works, and her power from their magnitude, you must, for the same reason, infer her intelligence from their mechanism.

Mr. C. That is a clencher.

Believer. And the same mode of arguing may be carried a little further. We see that the result of the arrangements of nature is the good of living creatures; we have, therefore a right to infer that nature is bene-

volent. But what is this nature? a nonentity, or a real being? If the former, how can she be either industrious, powerful, wise, or good? If the latter, wherein does she differ from a God? The fact is, then, an atheist who denies the existence of God is obliged to clothe nature with divine perfections; but these can belong to none but a divine being. Mr. A. says we are unacquainted with the manner in which nature forms a stone, etc., which is true; but the manner of formation is not the question, but whether they bear marks of skill. "Nature," he says, "can do all things; and the existence of anything proves itself to be one of her productions." If nature, without a guiding intelligence, can do all things, then she can make a watch. But every person knows that to be impossible. "The existence of anything proves itself to be one of her productions." My watch really exists, therefore it is the production of an unintelligent cause. How admirably does Mr. A. philosophize, now that he has got rid of vulgar prejudices!

Atheist. But I say, 2. "The savage to whom a watch is shown will either have ideas of human industry, or he will not. If he has, he will at once consider it to be the production of a being of his own species; if not, he will never think it the work of a being like himself. He will consequently attribute it to some genius or spirit, whom he will suppose capable of producing effects beyond those of human things. By this the savage will only prove his ignorance of what man is capable of performing."

Believer. This is conceding the point. It is supposing he will attribute the work to a skilful artist. It is possible he may mistake the cause, and think it supernatural; but it is granted he will not suppose it to be the production of an unintelligent being. Mr. A., therefore, to be consistent with himself, ought to admit that an intelligent cause made the universe, since he cannot deny that its mechanism infinitely exceeds that of a watch: and then we can soon settle who or what this cause is.

Atheist. But I say, 3. "That upon opening and examining the watch, the savage will perceive that it must be a work of man. He will at once perceive its difference from the immediate works of nature, as he never saw her produce any wheels of polished metal. But he will never suppose a material work to be the production of an immaterial being. In viewing the world, we see a material cause of its phenomena, and this cause is nature, whose energy is known to those who study her."

Believer. But here, again, you concede the main point, by supposing the savage "will perceive that the watch must be the work of man." For he would not conclude it must be the work of man, if he supposed it possible for an unintelligent cause to produce it. You think he will come to this conclusion, because he never saw nature produce wheels of polished metal. If he had seen nature make such a wheel, he must have come to the conclusion that nature is intelligent, since you admit that he could not ascribe a wheel of polished metal to blind chance. But though neither he nor you ever saw nature produce anything, yet when things are produced, if we would find out their cause, we must examine their properties; for we judge of causes by effects. In examining a wheel of polished metal, we perceive marks of mechanical skill, on which account you admit we must ascribe it to a rational agent. But in examining a human body, I find it a piece of mechanism infinitely superior to a wheel of polished metal; and if I must attribute the latter to a wise cause, I must not refer the former to an irrational one.

Atheist. "But he will never suppose a material work to be the production of an immaterial being."

Believer. Whether he will or not is not the present question; but whether an effect which manifests skill can be referred to a blind cause. This I maintain to be impossible; and this you have not so much as attempted to prove; but have granted all I contend for. Having demonstrated that every mechanical

effect must have an intelligent cause, and no one denying that the system of matter is mechanical in its arrangement and operation; it follows, that intelligence pervades the whole system of matter. It is not pretended by atheists that intelligence is an essential property of every particle of matter, or of any particle in an unorganized state; and as it has been proved that mechanical organization is the effect of intelligence, the atheistic conclusion, that intelligence is the effect of organization, is completely overturned. But if intelligence be not a property of matter in its separate particles, and does not result from their combination, but produces that combination, then intelligence is not a property of matter at all, and must consequently inhere in some spiritual or immaterial substance.

If mechanical arrangements might be produced without an intelligent cause, it would be impossible to prove that there is an intelligent cause of any kind in the universe. For instance: suppose I were to deny that Mr. A. is a rational being, how would he refute me?

Mr. D. Bravo! Come Mr. A. prove you possess reason, or it will not be worth Mr. B.'s while to argue with you.

Atheist. If my arguments, to which he has found it so difficult to make a plausible reply, are not admitted as proofs of my rationality, I think I should fail to convince him, even were I to make a wheel, or a world.

Believer. If a world may be constructed without a rational architect, so may a wheel, and so may any, or every thing else; and then there is no proof from the system of matter, that either man or any other being is possessed of reason. Mr. A. has said that there is nothing in the universe but matter and motion. Now since he rests his proofs of rationality on his arguments, I wish he would tell us whether they be matter or motion; for if they be neither, they have no existence, and consequently can be no proofs of reason. But waving this absurdity, his arguments are made up of words skilfully arranged. Alter the arrangement, and they contain unintelligible jargon, such as an idiot might

mutter. But if a skilful arrangement of matter be no evidence of an intelligent operator, then a skilful arrangement of words can be no evidence of a rational speaker. And, I say again, that upon atheistic principles, there is no possible way of proving that there is any such thing as intelligence, either in man or in anything else.

Atheistic arguments (stated and replied to) against the spirituality of the soul : —

1. "What is called the soul moves with us; but motion is a property of matter; therefore the soul is material."

That motion is a property of matter is true; but this does not prove that it may not be a property of spirit also. If the soul be material because it moves with the body, then ideas are material, because they move with the body; the will also must be material, because it moves with the body. But if so, I will thank an atheist to give me the size, shape, and weight, the superficial and solid contents of an idea, and of the will. I have, however, shown that motion is not an essential property of matter; nor is it an essential property of mind; it becomes an accidental property, arising from the union of mind with body.

2. "The soul shows itself to be material, in the invincible obstacles which it encounters on the part of the body. If the soul causes me to move my arm when there is no obstacle in the way, it ceases to do so when the arm is pressed down by a heavy weight. Here then is a mass of matter which annihilates an impulse given by a spiritual cause, which being unconnected with matter, ought to meet with no resistance from it."

Answer. Those who plead for the spirituality of the soul do not say that it is unconnected with matter. It is because the spirit is connected with matter, that it meets with resistance from it. Every man is conscious that by an act of the will he can move his arm when there is no obstacle in the way; and he knows too that however willing he may be, he cannot move

his arm when it is pressed down by a heavy weight. But the will is not matter. Here then is a mass of matter which annihilates an impulse given by a spiritual "or immaterial cause." And I defy all the atheists in the world to overturn this fact.

3. "Motion supposes extent and solidity in the body that is moved. When we ascribe action to a cause, we must, therefore, consider that cause to be material. While I walk forward I do not leave my soul behind me. Soul, therefore, possesses one quality in common with the body, and peculiar to matter."

Answer. If it be a body that is moved, it no doubt has solidity and extension. But that the soul is a body is the matter in dispute. But when we ascribe action to a cause, it is said that that cause must be material. This, however, is merely a gratuitous assumption. We have proved irrefragably that matter could not move at all, if it were not impelled by spirit. Nor could spirit be said to move it, unless it were united to it. The fact is, that though motion is not a property of either matter or spirit, separately considered, it is an essential property of the two when in union. All motion is the result of this union. When spirit has given motion to a mass of matter, that body may act on others and put them in motion; but it is spirit which gives the primary impulse. When two bodies, moving in different directions, come in contact, the motion of both is diminished, and becomes less, and less, until it entirely ceases, if an impulse of mind do not perpetually repair the waste of motion arising from the mutual action of these bodies on each other. "While I walk forward," it is said, "I do not leave my soul behind me." True; but if this prove the soul to be matter, it will prove the understanding to be matter also; for while I walk forward, I do not leave my understanding behind me: motion therefore is not peculiar to matter, unless the understanding be matter.

4. "The soul makes a part of the body, and experiences all its vicissitudes in passing through a state of infancy and debility, in partaking of its pleasures and

pains, and with the body exhibiting marks of dulness, debility, and death. In short, it is only the body viewed in relation to some of its functions."

Answer. This is only saying that while the soul is in union with the body, it cannot act independently of it; which nobody denies. In these circumstances, the acts of the soul must depend upon the state of the body; but this is no proof that the soul is a part of the body. If I hear the sound of an organ in an adjoining room, I know so much of the instrument that it cannot have set itself a playing; and, therefore, though none of my senses inform me that a person distinct from the instrument is touching the keys, yet my reason assures me that some person or other is playing on it. The person, however clever, cannot play well, unless the instrument be in tune; and he cannot play at all, if the instrument be destroyed. But if I were to conclude that no person used the instrument, because I could neither see, nor hear, nor feel him; that the power by which the keys were moved was debilitated, because some of the keys produced a feeble and discordant sound; and that the power by which the instrument had been used was extinct when the instrument was destroyed, I should come to a precipitate and a very foolish conclusion. My reason satisfies me that the instrument could not play itself, and that the performer might survive its destruction. So we have shown that matter itself cannot perform all that is done in the body; the body is merely the instrument of the mind, and the mind may as well survive the destruction of the body, as a musician may that of the organ. And, besides, the will and desires are generally as vigorous in infancy and old age, as in the perfection of manhood; they are not debilitated by the paralyzing influence of disease on the body.

On the supposition that the soul is immaterial, it must sympathize with the body during their union; how preposterous, then, to urge the necessary results of the union of the two natures as an argument against the reality of a twofold nature!

5. "But what sort of a substance is it, which can neither be seen nor felt?"

Answer. A spiritual substance; "an immaterial being, yet acting upon matter!" The will is immaterial, yet acts on matter. Every man has experience of this.

6. "But how can the body enclose a fugitive being, which eludes all the senses?"

Answer. The body encloses thought: can an atheist see a thought, or hear it, or feel it, or taste it, or smell it? There is no denying the fact that the body does enclose that which eludes all the senses. And when an atheist has explained how the body encloses thought, I will explain to him how it encloses a spiritual substance.

I have now transcribed and replied to the whole of what the author has advanced against the spirituality of the soul. Much of it is silly enough; but as this point is of the essence of the controversy, I could not deprive the reader of the gratification of knowing all that atheists have got to say against the soul's spirituality. And for the same reason, I shall give the whole of what they say, by way of explaining away all the faculties of the soul on material principles. The whole is set forth under the following title: "Of the intellectual faculties—All derived from sensation."

"Sensation is a manner of being affected, peculiar to certain organs of animated bodies, occasioned by the presence of a material object." To show what an adept our author is at defining terms:—Standing on the Castle Hill at Scarborough, one morning in June, the rising sun struck my organ of sight, and produced the sensations of wonder and admiration; but these sensations were not occasioned by the presence of a material object, for the object was some millions of miles distant. And it is not true that material objects produce all our sensations. Some wicked men, when thinking of God, have a sensation of fear and trembling. Good men, by contemplating the same object,

have a joyous sensation. Now, the object in these cases is not material. The atheist says there is no such object; if this were true, it could produce no sensations at all, of any kind; for nothing cannot produce something. The subjects of these sensations do not conceive of the object as material. If it be said the mind creates a chimera, which it clothes with the attributes of divinity, and then rejoices or trembles in the presence of this fancied deity, I ask, what is it that sets the mind to work to form this chimera? Matter may shake material organs for ever; but, at most, it can only raise ideas of itself. And when the chimera is produced, because it is only an imaginary being, and not a real one, it can give no shock to material organs; and, therefore, cannot produce any sensation. If it be contended that, when the imagination has raised a ghost, the mind may be pleased or terrified with this ideal being; I answer, this is giving up the point, for it is supposing that the imagination and the ideal being together give the shock to material organs, which produces the sensation; for a mere imaginary being is not matter; and if an atheist be stupid enough to insist that the imagination is matter, I will believe him when he has shown me its size, shape, and solid contents.

“Sensibility is the result of an arrangement peculiar to animals.” But can any man prove this, without including spirit in the arrangement?

“The organs reciprocally communicate impressions to one another.” Admirable! Then a house excites the organ of sight, and this organ impresses the other organs of sense, so that I no sooner see the house than I hear it, I feel it, I smell it, and taste it! Every sensation is a shock given to organs; a perception, that shock communicated to the brain; an idea, the image of the object which occasioned the sensation and perception. If our organs, therefore, be not moved, we can neither have perceptions nor ideas. And, according to the preceding paragraph, every sensation is produced by a material object; from which it neces-

sarily follows that we can only form ideas of material objects. But I have ideas of memory, judgment, reason, wisdom, folly, justice, mercy, etc., and these are not matter.

If sensation were the only source of ideas, man would be no wiser than a beast; for many animals have the senses as acute as man, and some of them much more so. But the mind of man has a power of reflection and abstraction, from which sources many of our most important ideas are derived, and no actings of matter on matter could possibly produce these ideas. All that matter can do in this business is merely to raise an idea or image of itself. If it produce other ideas, all notices from matter must be fallacious. The sight of a pipe can only give me the idea of a pipe. Should it produce another idea of anything else, it deceives me; and it is just as well fitted to give me an idea of Julius Cæsar, as of courage or will.

"But," says the atheist, "memory produces imagination; for we first form a picture of the things we have seen, and then, by imagination, transport ourselves to what we do not see." And he might have said, with just as much truth and point, that memory produces the gout, as that it produces imagination; for it is just as easy to prove the one as the other. But our sagacious author forgot to inform us what produces memory. (See Note A. at the end of the Essay.) "We form," he says, "a picture of the things we have seen." Let us see how this will accord with what he had just said. "If our organs be not moved, we can neither have perceptions nor ideas."

This motion of the organs he calls a sensation. And "a sensation is occasioned by the presence of a material object." According to this, memory is impossible; for memory is the faculty by which we recollect things past. To make this quite plain: I saw a woodcock yesterday; but many things have since engaged my attention, and put the woodcock out of my thoughts: that is, I have not perceived the picture of the woodcock in my mind at all since. Now the ques-

tion is, what can revive my perception of the picture, image, or idea of the woodcock. "If our organs be not moved, we can neither have perceptions nor ideas." The organs, therefore, must be moved; but what moves the organs? "Sensation is a shock given to organs, and is occasioned by the presence of material objects." But the idea produced can be neither more nor less than the picture of the object; for an idea is defined by the author to be the image of the object which occasioned the sensation and perception. From hence it necessarily follows, that the material object, the woodcock itself, must again affect my organs, or I can have no perceptions or ideas of it, after the percipient principle has been diverted to another subject. Memory, therefore, upon these principles, is impossible. Our author says, "memory produces imagination." But, upon his principles, we have seen there can be no memory, and, consequently, no imagination. But admitting, for the sake of argument, that there is such a thing as memory, and that it produces imagination; how is it that, by imagination, we transport ourselves to what we do not see? What is meant by we and ourselves here? Not a lump of matter, surely; for imagination is soon weary of transporting that. She could never yet send or carry a single atom to the moon. And what is imagination? Is it matter? or a property of matter? If the former, it has size, shape, weight, etc. If it be a property of matter, as no property can exist separate from its substance, I cannot be anywhere in imagination, where my body is not. Besides, as nobody supposes either memory or imagination to be a substance of any kind, imagination cannot be the production of memory, for one property cannot produce another property. Roundness and weight are the properties of a ball; but the roundness does not produce the weight, nor the weight the roundness. Once more, no property can act but as it is moved by its substance; nor can it be where its substance is not. What nonsense to talk of imagination transporting us: if it be only a property of matter, the body must trans-

port it; but the body can only do this by accompanying it. How, therefore, our atheists can transport themselves to what they do not see, I know not, unless their bodies were provided with a pair of wings, instead of a pair of eyes.

"Passions," say our atheists, "are movements of the will, determined by the objects which act upon it, according to our actual form of existence." Surely the senselessness and affectation of this paragraph is worthy these profound mystical doctors! If it be intended to teach that the passions are only moved by material objects, it is false. For God is an object that often moves the passions. If there were no God, and if the passions were properties of the body, as the atheists affirm, they can only account for the fact, that the passions are moved by an apprehension of God, on the supposition that the mind conceives him to exist, though he does not really exist; and that by placing itself in the presence of this imaginary being, the passions are affected in the same way as though he were really present. But a merely imaginary being, who has no real existence, cannot move on matter; matter can only be affected by realities. And if matter cannot be moved by an unreal being, neither can the properties of matter; for they can only be moved by the motion of their substance. Thus my leaden inkstand has the properties of extension, solidity, and roundness; but I cannot move these properties without moving the stand. If the passions, therefore, were properties of matter, they could not be moved without putting the matter in motion; and if God were not a real being, he could not excite motion in matter. The fact, therefore, that the apprehended presence gives motion to the passions, entirely overturns the material system.

But further: it was said above, that "an idea is the image of the object which occasions sensation and perception;" and that "sensation is occasioned by the presence of a material object." Now according to this an idea of God could not possibly be formed,

since he is not a material object; for if a material be necessary to sensation, and sensation to an idea, and the idea must be the image of the material object which produced the sensation; then, since God is not a material object, no idea of him could be formed.

“The intellectual faculties attributed to the soul, are modifications ascribable to the objects which strike the senses. Hence a trembling in the members, when the brain is affected by the movement called fear.” But if the intellectual faculties are ascribable to the objects which strike the senses, how is it that they can act, which it is notorious they do, in sleep, when the senses are all locked up? And when awake, there is often “a movement called fear” produced by objects which do not strike the senses. When the thoughts of a profligate have been directed to God, and a judgment to come, neither of which objects strike the senses, he has sometimes been “affected by the movement called fear,” and by “a trembling in the members.” An atheist may call this superstition; but it affords demonstrable evidence that the intellectual faculties may be excited by objects which do not strike the senses.

I have now given every word in that part of this noted author’s work, which was to prove that the intellectual faculties of man are all derived from sensation, and sensation from the presence of some material object. And throughout the whole it will have been observed, that not the least attempt is made to prove a single point. It entirely consists of unsupported assertions. The greater part of what he has said, I have shown to be false; and the few truths that remain could never be explained on atheistic principles. And a consciousness of this it was, unquestionably, that led him to abstain from any attempt to show that they support his creed.

But he ought to have known that there are intellectual operations which he has neither attempted to explain nor so much as named, upon which the principal stress is laid in arguing for a spiritual principle in

man. He has merely alluded to ideas derived from sensation. The only proof of wisdom which the author in this part of his production evinces is, not in what it contains, but in what it omits. There is no reference whatever to ideas derived from reflection, and abstraction, and those operations of the intellect by which they are formed. I should like to see an atheist attempt to show how matter can produce a thinking principle, and employ it upon subjects material, moral and intellectual, far and near, visible and invisible, past, present and future, in forming, uniting, abstracting and comparing ideas; in reasoning, judging, willing, etc. The creation of matter by mind would be a trifle compared with these gigantic operations of matter.

In the mean time I think the following observations of Dr. Watts will have some weight with us: "The soul is not matter. For, as the very nature of matter or body is solid extension, so I can have no possible conception what extension or solidity can do towards thinking, judging reasoning, wishing, willing, etc. The ideas are so entirely different, that they seem to be things as utterly distinct as any two things we can name or mention; not heaven and earth are so different from each other as are thought and matter. I can no more conceive what affinity there is between solid extension and thinking, than I can conceive of any affinity between green and the sound of a violin, or red and the taste of a cucumber. The ideas of a bitter colour, a blue smell, or a purple sound, are as clear ideas in my conception, and as intelligible things, as thinking body, conscious matter, judging extension, or reasoning quantity.

Upon atheistic principles it is utterly impossible that man should have any ideas of an immaterial being. It is taken for granted in chapter x. of the author's work, that "we can only form ideas of material objects." Now whether there be any such things as spirits or not, it is certain we do form ideas of them. But it is said we can form no idea of the nature of spirit. I aver we can. We have as distinct ideas of spirit as of matter.

We know nothing of the essence of either; we judge of both by their properties; and we have quite as distinct notions of the properties of one as of the other. To say that the mind mistakes in supposing the thinking power to be immaterial, since thought may be nothing else than the result of peculiar organization, does not in the least degree solve the difficulty; because if we can form ideas of material objects only, such a mistake would be impossible. We have the idea of an immaterial being, and this plain fact will overturn the whole system of atheism.

Note A. It should seem that the translator of Mirabaud's work, perceiving a defect in this part of it, endeavoured to supply this defect in a note at the end of his pamphlet. "Man," says he, "is born with a disposition to know, or to feel and receive impressions from the actions of other bodies upon him. Those impressions are called sensations, perceptions, or ideas. These impressions leave a trace or vestige of themselves, which are sometimes excited in the absence of the objects which occasioned them. This is the faculty of memory, or the sentiment by which man has a knowledge of former impressions, accompanied by a perception of the distinction between the time he received, and that in which he remembers them."

In the vocabulary of these profound philosophers, impressions are called sensations, perceptions, or ideas. Thus suppose you make impressions on the bough of a tree by chopping nicks in it with an axe, "those impressions are called sensations, perceptions, or ideas," which the tree receives of an axe. "These impressions leave a trace or vestige of themselves," namely, the nicks, "which are sometimes excited" by the wind "in the absence of the object," that is to say, the axe, which occasioned them. This is the faculty of memory in the tree, "or the sentiment by which" the tree "has a knowledge of former impressions, accompanied by a perception of the distinction between the time it received, and that in which it remembers them."

If impressions may be called ideas ; and if memory be nothing but the excitement of the vestiges left by impressions, then the consequence necessarily follows, that trees are as capable as men of receiving ideas and exercising memory ! The translator does indeed remind us, that " man is born with a disposition to know or to feel impressions," as well as to receive them. But if man were nothing but a lump of matter, which could receive ideas and memory only as it is acted upon by other matter, our conjurer should have told us how an axe could communicate ideas and memory to man and not to a tree.

ON THE MORAL GOVERNMENT
OF GOD.



ON THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

THERE can be no government without laws, nor laws without sanctions. The laws of God, as defined by the apostle, are "holy, just, and good." The holiness and goodness, therefore, of the Deity, as well as his justice, require that these laws should be executed. The nature of the laws, and the character of the legislator, are not altered by the legal punishment of transgressors. God displays his holiness, justice, and goodness, as much in the punishment of vice, as in the reward of virtue. It is an act of goodness to execute good laws; and inconsistent with it to set them aside.

Good laws must have a tendency to promote the welfare of the community at large; and this object can only be secured by a due execution of them. The penalty is intended to operate as a restraint; and when this fails, it must be inflicted on the offender as a warning to others. If the laws may be violated with impunity, they lose all their authority; and the benefit proposed to the public by their enactment is lost; and all the evils which their execution would have averted from society, are let loose upon it. In such a case, lenity to sinners is a public injury. A good magistrate, therefore, must execute good laws.

The laws of God extend to the thoughts and intents of the heart; and, of course, none but himself can ascertain the extent of transgression. He has, however, informed us of the fact, that "all have sinned." Some have controverted this fact, and maintained that the character given of a few individuals in scripture,

is inconsistent with the supposition that they were sinners. It is said of Caleb, that he "followed the Lord fully:" of Zacharias and Elisabeth, that they were both righteous before God, walking "in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;" and of Nathanael, that he was "an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile."

That these were all very good people, there is no room to doubt; but that they never violated the divine law, is neither said, nor yet implied. In what respect Caleb followed the Lord fully is explained in the context; it relates merely to his conduct as one of the spies; and in that affair he did the whole will of God. But it does not follow that he never sinned on other occasions. Zacharias and Elisabeth walked in the ordinances of the Lord; and these, as distinguished from the commandments, must mean the rites and ceremonies of the law. The chief of these ordinances related to sacrifices for sin. Besides, Zacharias was a priest, and it was a duty imposed upon the priests to offer sacrifices for their own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. We are informed of one of his sins in the same chapter which pronounces him blameless. Why was he struck dumb for not believing the angel, if his unbelief were perfectly innocent? Nathanael was without guile when introduced to our Lord; but we are not certain that he always supported that character; and if he had, there are other sins besides hypocrisy. It is certain that he entertained a very foolish prejudice: "Can any good thing," says he, "come out of Nazareth?"

We very often, in scripture, meet with testimonies in favour of the general good character of individuals, though they were not absolutely spotless. Job is called "a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil;" and yet Job confessed to God, "Behold, I am vile!" Abraham is styled "the father of the faithful," and "the friend of God;" but even Abraham adhered not to the truth, and thereby exposed the virtue of his wife. Nothing is more clearly

revealed in scripture, than the doctrine of universal depravity. "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." "There is none righteous, no, not one." "Every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." "There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

It will, perhaps, be said that the argument in favour of the execution of the laws, drawn from the interests of society being involved in it, applies only in cases where the offenders are few; but when the community at large have transgressed, the public welfare seems to require some relaxation of the laws; as this would be a benefit to the whole, and an injury to none. For instance: suppose a few individuals to commit an act of high treason against their sovereign; it might be proper to put the laws in force against them, with a view to preserve the rest in their obedience; but were the whole nation to rise up against him, and were he even possessed of power sufficient, by virtue of his foreign connexions, to bring them to justice, a good sovereign would pause before he destroyed all his subjects: mercy would dictate that they should be forgiven, on an acknowledgment of their error, and a return to their duty.

In the instance here given, mercy is exercised at the expense of justice. If some expedient could have been devised, which would have supported the authority of law in the method of showing mercy, no one will deny that it would have been preferable. The argument requires that the law respecting treason, in the case under review, should be considered as a good law; and exactly in proportion to its goodness, and the degree in which it is relaxed, is the evil of that relaxation; but it is conceived to be a lesser evil in the case in question, to remit the penalty, than to inflict it. The objector then, in applying his instance to the divine government, is reduced to a choice of evils, and adopts the non-execution of the law as the least of the two. What a foul imputation does this cast on the

wisdom, the justice, and the goodness of God ! Upon our scheme the wisdom of God is manifested, his justice is fully satisfied, and his mercy richly displayed, through the medium of a vicarious sacrifice.

Exactly in proportion as laws are relaxed, their influence upon society is diminished. We have laws which annex the penalty of death to many crimes ; but in practice, seven years' transportation is, in many instances, the only punishment ever inflicted ; it is not, therefore, the fear of death, but the fear of transportation, which will operate as a restraint in these cases. Suppose the punishment of death threatened in the law, were constantly commuted by the judges, for a year's imprisonment ; it would not be the fear of death, but the dread of imprisonment merely, that would operate on the minds of evil disposed persons. And when a law has become obsolete, no matter what its penalty may be, it is not regarded at all, because it is not put in force. All will allow that the authority of good laws ought to be maintained : and to do this, they must be executed. The case of Zaleucus, a legislator of the Locrians, is well known. He made a law, that adulterers should be punished with the loss of both their eyes. His son transgressed. To support the dignity of the law, and at the same time to show the compassion of a parent, he put out his own right eye, and his son's left. This example of justice made so strong an impression on the minds of his subjects, that no other instance occurred of the commission of that offence, during the remainder of his reign. What would have been the effect, had the criminal been pardoned on condition of not repeating his crime ? The Spartans had a law, that those who fled in battle should be excluded from all offices and employments, submit to be buffeted in the streets, wear dirty and ragged habits full of patches of different colours, shave half their beards, and let the other half grow ; and that it should be a disgrace to contract any alliance with them by marriage. In the great defeat which they suffered at the battle of Leuctra, many, and those of

the most powerful families, had turned their backs to the enemy. It was dangerous to attempt the execution of the law upon the criminals; and it was considered to be equally dangerous to change the law. In this extremity, Agesilaus decreed "that for the present day, the law should be suspended, and of no effect; but ever after, to remain in full force and authority." In these instances, and in many others that might be added, the best expedients were adopted which human ingenuity could devise, to show mercy to the offenders, without lessening the force of law. They are not intended as illustrations of the doctrine of atonement; infinite wisdom devised a plan for displaying his justice in the forgiveness of sins, beyond all comparison superior: but they show the sense which the wisest and best of the ancients had, of the necessity of maintaining the claims of justice in dispensing mercy.

The objection supposes all the subjects to have rebelled against the sovereign; but this does not apply to the case in hand. The human race are not all the subjects which are under the divine government. There are angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, etc. These various orders of celestial intelligences, as we learn from scripture, are much employed in the affairs of men; and the angels in particular, are said to look into the economy of redemption under which we are placed. This world, therefore, is to be regarded only as a single province of the mighty empire of God. Now let us suppose the whole inhabitants of a province or district to rise up in rebellion against their earthly sovereign; no one, I presume, would think it prudent in the king to make proclamation among them, that they should all be pardoned on a promise of allegiance for the future, without punishing a single individual; because this would be making light of the affair, and would hold out a most dangerous example to the other districts of the kingdom. In all cases of this sort, the most humane kings that ever reigned, have found it necessary to execute one or more of the principal offenders, in order to support the

authority of their government, and exhibit a salutary warning to the rest of the empire. No human laws would be respected, that were set aside by the clemency of the judge; and we must not admit a principle in the government of God, which would prove destructive to every government upon earth.

The perfection of any government consists in the enactment, and in the due execution of a code of laws calculated to produce the greatest degree of happiness among the subjects. The supreme ruler can have no other object in view, in relation to his subjects, than the promotion of their happiness; and it is because virtue and happiness are inseparably connected together, that his laws are holy and just, as well as good. Such laws cannot be relaxed, or the penalty dispensed with, without injury to the community. Those who plead for abatements in the law, must suppose that it is too strict; that it would be better for man if so much virtue were not required of him; in other words, that the law is not so good as it might have been. And those who contend that the penalty ought to be set aside in favour of transgressors, argue on the supposition that its severity is inconsistent with the welfare of God's creatures. Now what is all this but impeaching the wisdom, holiness, and goodness of God? It may be proper to add to, to repeal, to alter, to relax, or to suspend, laws which are defective; but the better they are, the more strictly they should be enforced; and those that cannot be mended, which is always the case with the laws of God, ought to be fully executed.

When an earthly monarch punishes a few rebels and pardons the rest, supposing each to be equally guilty, justice and mercy are both partially exercised, and with respect of persons; there is no mercy shown to some, and no justice done to others. This is certainly a defect; but a defect which cannot be remedied by human ingenuity. Had justice been satisfied with respect to the whole, and then mercy extended to the whole, these two prime attributes of government would have appeared in perfect and harmonious operation;

but human wisdom is too weak to devise an expedient by which this might be effected; and is, therefore, obliged to be satisfied with a compromise: justice must be content with seizing a few of its victims, and mercy, with rescuing the remainder. There is not, nor can there be, any such defect in the divine administration. A vicarious sacrifice solves the difficulty; for here, "mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Suppose a difference in the guilt of the offenders, and the worst only to be punished, this does not alter the case; there is the same defect, though not in the same degree. In the kingdom of God, mercy is extended to all sinners; to the chief, as well as to the least. But in doing this, he does not set aside, but display his justice: "Being justified by faith, not meritoriously, but of free gift, by grace, through the redemption which is by Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiatory, through faith in his blood, for a proof of his own righteousness in passing by the sins which were before committed, through the forbearance of God; for a proof also of his righteousness in the present time, in order that he may be just when justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus. By 'the sins which were before committed' is meant, the violations of the law previous to the coming of Christ; and by 'the present time' is meant, the period of the gospel dispensation." (Rom. iii. 24—26, Macknight's translation.) This is a most important text. If the death of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, was necessary to furnish a proof of the righteousness of God in the forgiveness of sin, then without it, we should have no proof that he acted right in showing mercy. And, if God adopted this method of salvation, "in order that he may be just, when justifying" sinners, it seems necessarily to follow, that he would be unjust, to save them in any other way. Here we see the strict accordance of scripture and reason.

It is contended, that magistrates have in many instances a discretionary power lodged in their hands,

to execute or remit the penalty of the law, and it seems strange to deny this power to God. But this will cease to surprise us, when we consider the reasons why magistrates are invested with this authority: 1. Because the evidence of guilt may not be clear. There may be strong probability of guilt, and yet be room for doubt; and when this is the case, it is quite proper the prisoner should have the benefit of it. If guilt could always be fully brought to light, it ought not to be spared and this is the case under the divine economy. 2. Because there may be some palliating circumstances, which would render the vigorous execution of the law harsh and severe. It is impossible that human laws should have their sanctions as various as the shades of guilt, that thus the punishment might be proportioned to the sin. The punishment is generally the same for the same crime, without making any difference for the different degrees of guilt under which it may be committed. Murder is sometimes so nearly allied to manslaughter, that it is not easily to be distinguished from it. In such cases it is not by any means so criminal, as when it is the result of deep rooted malice, and accompanied with the highest acts of cruelty. Hence the necessity of a discretionary power being entrusted to the executive. But God will reward every man according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good, or whether they have been evil. He will suit his chastisements exactly to the degree of moral pravity in the offender. This discretionary power among men, is owing to the defectibility of human legislation; but "the law of the Lord is perfect," and, therefore, its decisions cannot be altered but for the worse. If human laws were perfect, and the judges infallible, so that no doubt could arise in the administration of them, from defective or suspicious evidence; they could not be set aside or altered in a single instance, without injustice.

The pleas which usually are urged, why God should dispense with the penalty of the law in the favour of sinners, must be noticed. And —

1. Considerable stress is laid on the goodness of God. Some have viewed the law as a mere covenant of works, in such a sense as to exclude all grace. Those under it are supposed to be dealt with on the ground of strict justice, without any mixture of mercy. On this the enemies of the atonement remark, that as God is gracious in his nature, he must be gracious to his creatures; and that, in point of fact, the scriptures represent him as a being good to all, and as exercising tender mercy over all his works; but if there be no grace in the law, and if the grace of the gospel be all purchased by the blood of Christ, it follows that there is no display of the gratuitous goodness of God, under either law or gospel, which is giving a very harsh representation of the divine character. I answer, the law is full of grace; but this grace is promised to none but the obedient. "Showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." As no creature, however exalted, had any claims on God, even for a moment's existence, it is impossible that its virtues should merit eternal happiness. If he preserved it in happiness so long as it continued obedient, he would do it no injustice to annihilate it at any period; the promise, therefore, of everlasting blessedness as the reward of a short period of obedience, contained in it infinite grace. This was the case with man. And he can claim no more from the goodness of God than the execution of that gracious law. After he has voluntarily rejected the grace promised in the law, by wilful transgression, to say that he is entitled to new favours from God, is in effect to say, that his claims on divine goodness increase in the same ratio with his rebellion. It may be proper, in some cases, to bestow additional favours upon the obedient; but sinners have forfeited all.

As to the grace of the gospel being purchased by Christ, and, therefore, not flowing from the goodness of God, the objection shall be considered more fully in another place. It is sufficient to remark here, that no other reason can be assigned than his own infinite

goodness, why God should be induced on any account to receive sinners to favour ; but when the means of their restoration and happiness are furnished by himself, which is what the gospel teaches, his goodness shines out with most resplendent lustre.

2. Much has been said respecting the tears of repentance washing away our sins. Human laws, however, never admit the repentance of an offender as an atonement for his crime. No government could exist which should recognize such a principle. If it be said that no earthly judge can ascertain the sincerity of the repentance of a criminal, and this may be the reason why there is no place found for repentance in the codes of legislators ; I answer, that it would be dangerous to allow the doctrine in question a place in human constitutions, supposing magistrates possessed the faculty of searching the hearts of delinquents. In this case, human laws would possess no power of restraint from the commission of a first crime, nor could they provide any cure for the evil of it ; they would only operate against the repetition of it. In a case of murder, followed by repentance and pardon, there is no reparation of the injury : the dead is not restored to life, and the widow and orphans receive no equivalent for the loss of a husband and a father. That government cannot be justified, which being unable to repair an injury, does not employ the most effectual means to prevent it. In the government of God, the prevention of a first transgression is now out of the question, “ for all have sinned ;” and the providence of God will prevent the quantum of misery, which we suffer through the crimes of others, from exceeding the measure due to us for our own. Repentance is admitted and commanded by the gospel, not under an idea that the divine law required nothing more, or that the evils of sin are remedied by it, but because atonement has been made by the death of Christ, and the obstacle to our salvation from the justice of God thereby removed ; therefore we are invited to repent and turn unto the Lord. Hence it is that repentance is connected with

the work of Christ, and dependent upon it. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name." (Acts v. 31; Luke xxiv. 47.)

3. A reformation of manners is largely insisted on, as a sufficient reason why the penalty of the law should be set aside. In fact, repentance is only important as it produces a change of character and conduct. But this cannot repair the breach. The divine law does not permit us to spend nearly half our time in the service of sin, on condition that the remainder be devoted to the service of God; it requires constant and universal obedience, and pronounces on all who yield it not, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) There is no merit in our virtue to cancel the demerit of our vice. "When," says our Saviour, "ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke xvii. 10.) And if those are unprofitable servants, who have done the whole of their duty, how can those be meritorious who have only done a part of it? If we could practice more virtue in old age than the law demands, we might set the surplus against the vices of youth; and if the balance were in our favour, justice, of course, would be satisfied: but we have departed from the line of duty on the left hand, by committing sin; and we cannot go beyond it on the right hand, by an excess of righteousness; we are, therefore, as liable to be punished for our past sins, though latterly we may have added nothing to the amount, as a tradesman is to be arrested for an old debt, though he may have been honest in his subsequent transactions. Most of the Socinians hold that the law threatens no punishment but what is designed for the moral improvement of offenders; and that as soon as they are reformed, the object of the law is attained, and justice completely

satisfied. This favourite notion of corrective punishment is full of absurdity. It —

1. Supposes that the sinner deserves no more punishment than he actually receives; and that, consequently, he has nothing forgiven. For if the only principle of punishment in the divine government be the reformation of the transgressor; and if this government is so constituted, that every transgressor must be reformed; it necessarily follows that every sinner must receive as much punishment as the law threatens, that is, as much as is necessary to make him virtuous; and when he has thus actually suffered the full penalty of the law, he has nothing forgiven. It follows also, that if the law threatens punishment only as a corrective, then those who repent and reform in this life, have not deserved any future punishment.

2. It destroys all proportion between crime and punishment. A comparatively little sin may be formed into a habit as inveterate in our mind, as the greatest crime in another, and may therefore require the same severity of discipline to eradicate it. According to scripture and common sense justice is retrospective, and only takes cognizance of “deeds done in the body;” but according to the Socinian scheme it is prospective, and teaches men by stripes what they are to do.

3. It makes the quantum of punishment to depend upon the will of the offender. For whenever he chooses to reform, the end of the law in punishing is answered, and he must, of course, be released. The threatening of punishment, in this case, cannot operate as a restraint at all; for who will dread the infliction of that pain which he can remove at pleasure?

4. A Socinian cannot deny that punishments should be exemplary, but he thinks they may be corrective also. That these two objects cannot be combined in earthly governments is sufficiently evident; and that they are not combined in the divine government is proved by plain matter of fact. The destruction of the Sodomites, and of the Israelites who fell in the wilder-

ness, is represented in scripture as exemplary; (1 Cor. x. 6, 11; Jude 7;) but it would be as absurd to call these judgments 'correctives, as to affirm that criminals are hanged in order to make them useful members of society. The reasons assigned why punishment should be corrective as well as exemplary are, that God has determined on the virtue and happiness of all mankind, and therefore must adapt his chastisements to the furtherance of these objects. Having shown, however, that his government is not thus constituted, the assumption respecting the final virtue and happiness of the whole human race must fall to the ground. Reformation is no atonement for sin, nor is it the necessary effect of punishment.*

5. But the most ignorant and anti-scriptural method for setting aside the penalty of the divine law, and qualifying ourselves for heaven, is to set our virtues and vices in opposition to each other, and to take care that our virtues preponderate, at least a little. This sentiment has been most strangely and audaciously advocated by a rational divine of the establishment: "In estimating the worth of human character," says he, "we must not form our calculations on the conduct of one single day; but take the average of many days and years, and see what proportion a man's violation of his duty bears to its performance, his virtues to his vices, his sins to his righteousness." By this unscriptural device, repentance and reformation are rendered quite unnecessary. Instead of renouncing a beloved sin with abhorrence, nothing more is required than to practice a virtue of a rather superior order; and this, in most cases, will be found to be no very difficult task. Thus a covetous man may set against his avarice, the virtues of sobriety and chastity; for he cannot afford the expense of a deviation from either. And the robber may balance his roguery with his generosity; for what is easily acquired, is not unfrequently

* This subject may be seen treated of more at large in the "Doctrine of Universal Restoration examined and refuted," in the Third Volume of these Works.

very liberally bestowed : and when he has made free with the hoard of a miser, he has the merit of putting that into circulation for the benefit of the public which otherwise might have lain useless for many, many years. This wretched divinity at once deprives the law of God of nearly half of its authority. He who embraces it, feels himself at liberty to practise as much vice as he pleases, without endangering his salvation, provided his virtue does but outweigh it. Thus two men go off in a boat to a vessel in distress, and rescue eight persons from a watery grave. After this they may commit six murders, without forfeiting their title to heaven ; because, in settling their accounts with their Maker, there will be a balance of two in their favour. This doctrine of proportion is most abominable, giving murderers a right to the kingdom of God, without laying them under any obligation whatsoever to his mercy. Even a debauchee, who has ruined scores of the other sex, may atone for all his wickedness, by endowing a Magdalen hospital for the reception of more than he has deflowered and destroyed. Apply the rule of proportion, and you make him into a saint. This, therefore, is the fashionable way of going to heaven by good works !

This scheme makes it easy for some people to work out their salvation without either fear or trembling. In the above instances the boatmen more than cancel six murders by about an hour's rowing ; and the gentleman purchases a seat in paradise much cheaper than he could a popish pardon. A patriot who is guilty of blasphemy, gluttony, drunkenness, whoredom, etc., has only to employ his lungs in declaiming against speculation, and in reforming public abuses, and he is turned into a saint of the first magnitude. To be sure he has his private failings and infirmities ; but these are lost sight of in the splendour of his public virtues. There are spots in the sun. His errors have injured very few, his virtues have benefited a whole nation, and perhaps the whole world.

It might be expected that those who adopt this

creed would take care as they go along, to keep a clear balance on the side of virtue; but, unhappily, this is not always the case. Young people generally calculate on living to be old. They very naturally conclude that the pleasures of sin are most suitable to the vivacity of youth, and the gloom of religion to the gravity of age. Hence it is, that the account of virtue is much in arrear through the best part of life; and when the period arrives, at which the work of righteousness should be commenced and prosecuted with vigour, the power of sinful habits paralyzes every pious purpose and effort, and the latter end with such is worse than the beginning. Thus it happens that so many, who talk much about going to heaven by their goodness, have nothing to show but wickedness.

Our casuist advises, that "in forming our estimate of human character, we should take the average of many years, and see what proportion a man's virtues bear to his vices." By "many years" does he mean all the years we have been moral agents? If not, he should have informed us how many will be sufficient. The situations, circumstances, and constitutions of men frequently undergo great changes, at different periods of life, and these changes commonly occasion changes of character. Suppose a person of fifty years of age to institute an inquiry into his moral state in the sight of God. He has been a drunkard for the last five years. He calculates that sobriety might begin to be considered as a virtue at the age of twenty. There is, therefore, twenty five years of virtue to set against five of vice, leaving a balance of twenty in his favour; should he, therefore, die before he has reached his seventieth year, he may enjoy his bottle to the last, and yet have a surplus on the side of virtue, sufficient to translate him from the society of his pot companions, into that of the spirits of just men made perfect. Suppose another to live in sin until he is forty-five, and then to reform. It would not be safe for him, according to our author, to indulge any hopes of heaven till about the age of eighty. Should he die after twenty years of righteous-

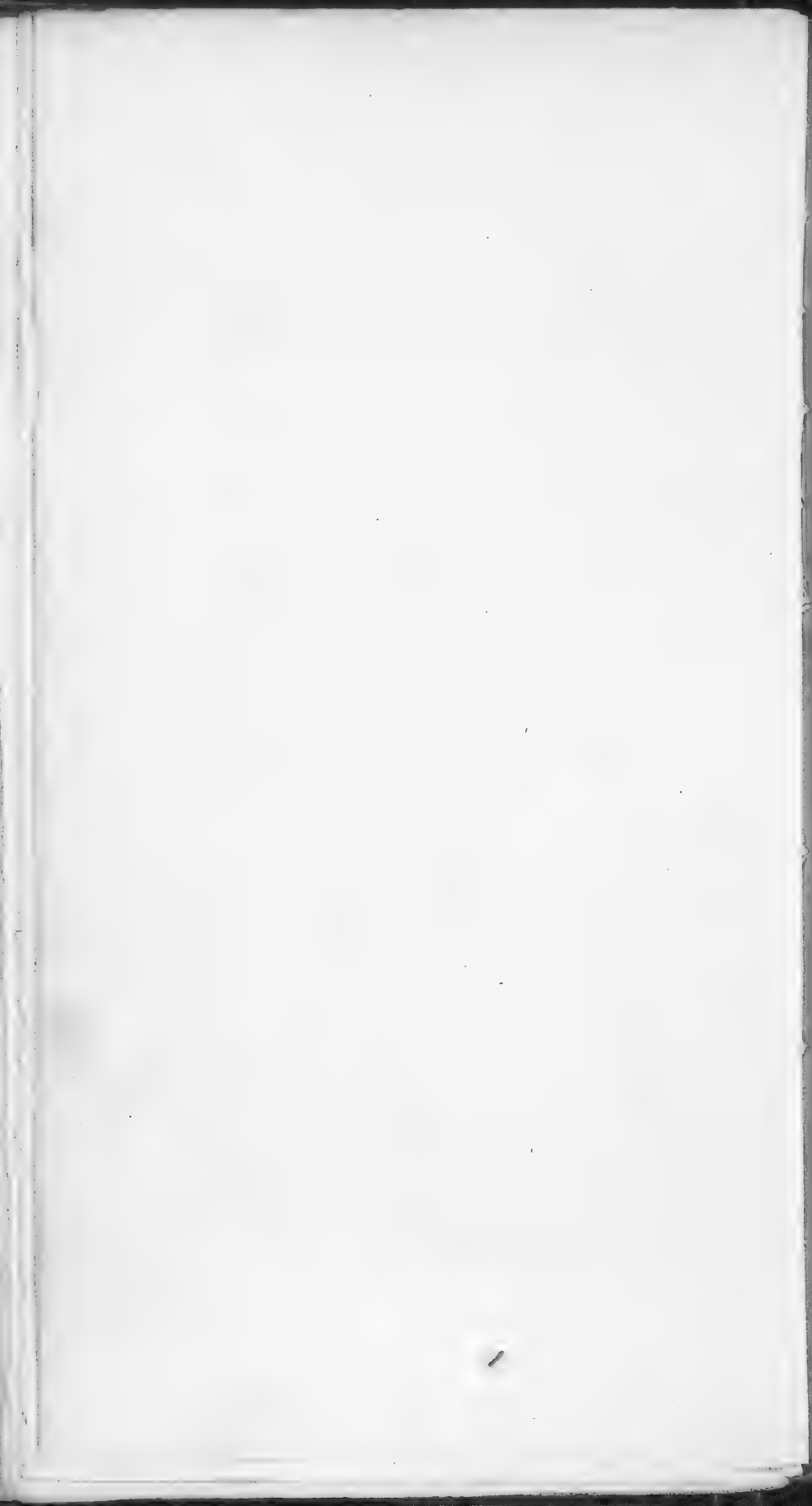
ness, the balance would be against him, and he must perish. The scripture rule is somewhat more agreeable to common sense: "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." (Ezek. xviii. 26, 27.)

We are desired to "see what proportion a man's violation of his duty bears to its performance." There is a command, "Thou shalt not steal." How would our moralist apply his rule of proportion to this precept? Is not its obligation binding at all times? If not, a man might spend seven or eight hours every day in thieving, and still the proportion of his time spent in obedience to the command would be in his favour. If we apply the rule to opportunity, the points to be considered are, how many opportunities he has had of stealing, how often he has been honest, and how often he has played the rogue. It is a very moderate calculation, to say, that a man has three opportunities every day of committing theft; if he, therefore, only transgress once a day, he keeps the law oftener than he breaks it, and must, consequently, be pronounced, on the whole, an honest fellow.

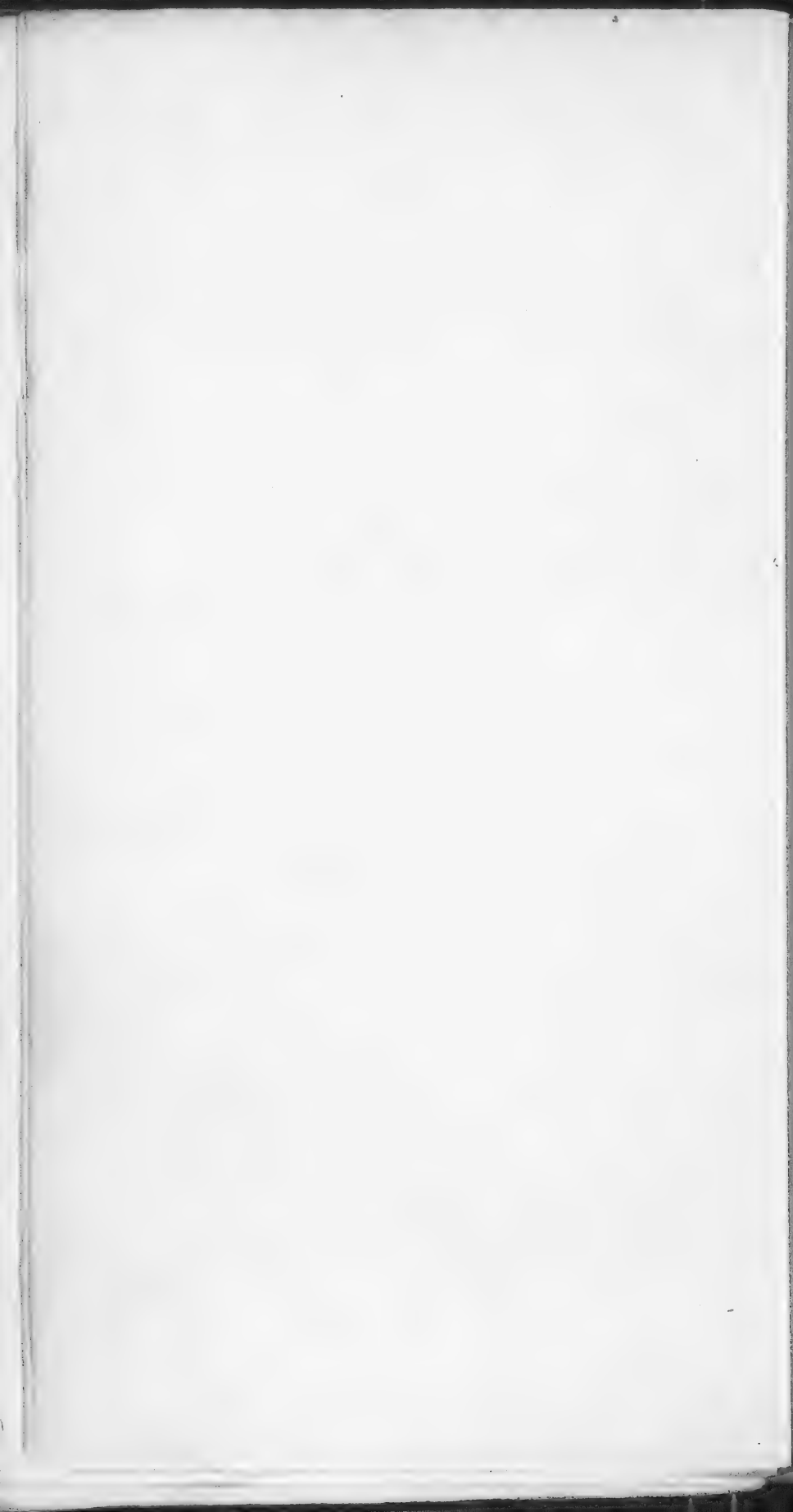
So much notice would not have been taken of so foolish a sentiment, had it not been so generally entertained, and productive of such pernicious consequences. If we are permitted to set our virtues against our vices, almost every man may be as wicked as he pleases. No man is addicted to all evils; and the worst have some virtues. There are but few who will not magnify their good works, and excuse their wickedness so as always to have a surplus stock of righteousness on hand; and those who have not, will quiet their consciences for the present with promises of amendment in future. Upon the scheme here opposed, the best man in heaven might also be the worst; for amongst those who have a majority of virtue, he who puts the most good works into

one scale, would be at liberty to put the most wickedness into the other. How strange that the clerical advocates of so monstrous a sentiment, should arrogate to themselves the title of moral preachers, and not content with that, should have the effrontery to stigmatize those who hold the doctrine of atonement, as enemies of all righteousness.

No earthly government could exist, were it administered according to this rule of proportion, supposing the magistrates could ascertain the true character of every delinquent; because in numberless instances the worst offenders would escape with impunity, and, therefore, no man could have any security of either his person or his property. This sentiment is completely overturned by St. James, who says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point," instead of his obedience atoning for his disobedience, and leaving a large sum of righteousness to be placed to the credit of his account, "he is guilty of all." No one can overturn the reasoning of the apostle on this subject: "For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." (James ii. 10, 11.) Jesus Christ "came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil." Not a jot or tittle of the law shall fail; on the contrary, God will magnify the law and make it honourable.



SKETCHES OF SERMONS.



SKETCHES OF SERMONS.

SKETCH I.

"FOR this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, (but as it is in truth,) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews." (1 Thes. ii. 13, 14.)

SURELY nothing can give greater satisfaction to a minister of Jesus Christ, next to the salvation of himself and kindred, than to witness the success of those means which he is employing to advance the divine honour in the salvation of mankind.

And if christian ministers are under obligation to give thanks to any one for their success, it must be to God who has given it to them; for "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God which giveth the increase." To him too are the thanks due for the honour he puts upon them, in calling them to, and blessing them in this dignified work. But that we may have a right view of the case, let us —

I. Consider how these Thessalonians received the word of God. And —

(1.) They received it not as the word of men; that is, not as though it chiefly owed its excellency and worth to the eloquence, learning, and deep thought of those who brought it to them. The greater part of those who preached it were unlearned, made no pretensions to oratory, or to anything profound in their manner of thinking; they claimed but to be men of plain common sense, who sincerely believed and greatly

prized the gospel which they preached. And in preaching this gospel their plan was, to conceal the speaker, as much as possible, and to give all the prominence they could to the divine word. Nor did they receive it because its doctrines and precepts were made palatable to their taste and predilections; for had they been thus accommodated and made relishable to sinners, it would at once have shown them to have been perverted; for those doctrines and precepts that are intended to reclaim and convert sinners, must needs give pain to them, in order to effect their object. Sinners often say to ministers practically, if not expressly, we do not like your doctrine, it is too rough and blunt: to such we reply, in the language of our Master, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." But—

(2.) They received it as what it was, and is, the word of God.

They did not content themselves with hearing, examining, admiring, commending, and being ready to defend it, if assailed; but they received it, and as the word of God, though ministered by men, not disputing its divine authority, but readily and entirely submitting to it.

To it they prostrated their understandings, gave their affections, and bowed or bent their wills.

They received it under the fullest assurance that it proceeded from God, and unhesitatingly rested on its testimony, declarations, and promises, not fearing any disappointment.

(3.) Hence the efficacy of its operation, "which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

It turned them from idolatry, and converted them into worshippers of the true God; it fitted them for his service, and inspired them with such zeal and courage in the Redeemer's cause, as enabled them to brave and bear the fiercest persecution, with meekness and constancy.

So effectually and perfectly did it change them, that they became examples to all that believed, in Macedonia and Achaia; and from its glorious operation on them, it acquired more celebrity, and derived an increased

impetus, and so ran, and extended itself yet farther and farther. And the result of all this was, that —

II. These Thessalonians became followers of the churches, verse 14, of the apostles, chap. i. 6, and of the Lord, chap. i. 6.

(1.) The word taught them that they were not to be their own masters, and “should not henceforth live unto themselves ;” and it taught them that they were not at liberty to live unto any other master, one being their master, even Christ. It said to them promptly and plainly, “None of us,” christians, “liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” And having owned Christ’s redeeming right in them, they —

(2.) Considered themselves obligated to follow the instructions and directions of his apostles, as containing the most perfect development of his doctrine and will ; they judged that they had no more right to dispute their teaching, than they had that of their Master. They —

(3.) Became “followers of the churches of God, which in Judea were in Christ Jesus.”

They felt themselves in duty bound to belong to the church of God, not to stand aloof from it. They became followers of the churches which were in Judea, rather than those elsewhere. Whether there was a church in Rome at this time, we cannot positively say ; most probably there was ; but of this we are sure, it had not acquired the impudence to claim, as its exclusive right, to be accounted as the only church of God in being : for here was a church of God at Thessalonica that was independent of it, and that chose to model itself after the churches that were in Judea, rather than any other.

After those churches in Judea that were in Christ Jesus, holding him as their head, adhering to his doc-

trine, showing forth his spirit, and treading in his footsteps, they closely copied.

And wherever the word effectually worketh, it perpetuates the same spirit and practice.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Have you received the word of God? But how have you received it? As the word of God?

2. And how does the word which you have received work in you? Effectually?

3. Has it brought you into the church of God, and converted you into the followers of the churches, of the apostles, and of Christ?

4. See that you be Bible christians, and such as others may safely and profitably imitate; they will imitate you, even should you remain unchanged, and out of the church; bad people exert a greater influence over bad people, than good ones do.

SKETCH II.

“SAY to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.” (Isaiah xxxv. 4.)

Who is the author of these cheering words? Jehovah, God of Israel, who is commanding his servant the prophet to encourage and comfort his faint and fearful people. This and the former chapter are thought to compose one entire and most interesting prophecy, in which he calls upon all nations and creatures to observe God's controversy with, and the denunciation of his vengeance on the enemies of his church and people.

And as the prophet is predicting the coming judgments of God, he sees, in the distance, the fearful and agitated state of the church, and is directed to address to her the consolatory language of the text: “Say to them of a fearful heart, be strong,” etc. Where observe —

I. The text does not totally prohibit fear; how should it?

(1.) This passion is necessary to save us from personal danger and misery: but for it, we should be exposing ourselves to both perpetually, not having the least apprehension of our liability to harm.

(2.) It is not less necessary to preserve us from sinning against God; for it is by the fear of the Lord that men depart from evil. (Prov. xvi. 6.) It was this that saved Job from sin; (Job i. 8;) and it puts every man on his guard against all that is improper in itself, and offensive to God. (Nehem. v. 9, 15.)

(3.) It often is necessary to drive us to duty. "Let us, therefore, fear, says St. Paul, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." But—

(4.) It is especially necessary that we should stand in awe of God, as the avenger of grace prostituted, or turned into wantonness. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom, which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire."

(5.) It is necessary to fear the devil himself, subordnately; also evil men, beasts, and whatever else would put health, life, or enjoyment in jeopardy; for were we to look on these as harmless, or to entertain any other feelings towards them than those of dread, we should be in no small danger of injury by them. But—

(6.) We should especially fear ourselves more than any other creature; for so long as we are distrustful of ourselves, and are guarding against all in ourselves that would betray and make us a prey to evil; and so long as we are looking to God alone, who is able to save and keep us from falling, we shall be unconquerable, and safe. But observe—

II. We must take heed that our fear be not excessive; for if it be, it will be sinful. And—

(1.) Then is our fear of the creature excessive, when we fear it more, or as much, as God himself. What

is the creature's power to destroy, compared with God's? He can only kill the body at most; God can destroy body and soul in hell.

Or what injury is it that the creature has it in his power to do, if God restrain him? Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? See the Sodomites stricken with blindness: see the lions' mouths shut in Daniel's case: see the fire unable to burn Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

To dread the creature's frown and wrath then, more, or as much as God's, must be highly offensive to the divine Being. But —

(2.) Then must our fear of God himself be excessive, when we fear him either for what is not in him, as though, for example, he could absolutely and from eternity, hate any of his intelligent creatures; or, as though he could break his promise of pardon to the penitent, of purity to his people, of provision to the needy, or of succour to the tempted: to fear him thus, is to dishonour him indeed, and rouse his indignation against us. Nay —

(3.) Then is our fear of God excessive and groundless, when it prevents us from coming to the throne of grace, to the table of the Lord, or to any other of his ordinances, to which we are invited; when it paralyzes exertion to purify and save ourselves; or when it interrupts the flow of our love and thanksgiving to God. Allow me, therefore, —

III. To call your attention to the directions given to control and regulate this important passion. "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not; your God will come with vengeance," etc. That your fear of God himself may yield you all possible advantage —

Think more of his mercy in Christ, that is, his mercy in giving him, sending him, bruising and putting him to grief, bringing him from the dead, and in exalting him to be a Prince and a Saviour.

Think more of his special mercies to others and yourselves.

Think more of his character as imprinted on his works, expressed in his word, and made known by his people; and be sure to accompany such meditations with praise to his name.

But, above all, think how it dishonours him, to conceive of him as you do of satan himself.

(2.) Against an excessive fear of the devil allow me to guard you.

Remember he is a chained enemy; for although he walks up and down in the earth, and is ever going about, "seeking whom he may devour;" yet, remember, he can only devour those he may; that is, those whom he is appointed to devour, none else.

Remember too, that Christ your Saviour has conquered him, and has promised to give you the victory over him. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace; be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and so shall ye; and its god too.

Remember too, that to tremble and quake before him, gratifies and honours him.

If you are fearing that he will one day cause you to sin, call to mind that he cannot do this so long as you distrust yourselves, and are seeking for God to save you. And would you —

(3.) Guard against the excessive and sinful fear of man? Then —

Trust him not, and you will not need to fear him; for it is of what consequence you make him, or what importance you attach to him, that gives him so formidable an appearance; and however formidable he may appear unto us, it is but little that he can give to or take from us.

And remember always to sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, making him your fear and your dread, and the fear of man will die.

And finally, fear not suffering; always remember that God can and will limit it as to quantity; that he will assuredly sanctify it as to quality, if sought unto for that purpose; and that when the end of its permission has been answered, he will make an end of it.

Never forget, when man opposes and persecutes you, that either God may remove him by his stroke, elsewhere; or, in his mercy, take you out of his reach.

Bear in mind there is a providence watching over all God's faithful people.

And finally, remember the future destination of the fearful and unbelieving.

SKETCH III.

"AND Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke xix. 1—10.)

THIS is an interesting portion of history respecting a man of whom very different opinions have been formed, and that by persons who have professed to fetch their views of him from the very same narrative. Among other notions that have been entertained of him is that, that he was a vile, covetous exactor, availing himself of his office (a collector of the public revenue) for the purpose of amassing wealth by a course of unrighteous requisition. The persons who think thus of him, imagine that by this interview with Christ he was stricken with remorse, and instantly resolved on a new and very different conduct. And certainly had

such been his previous course of life, no change could have been more becoming and necessary. But—

(1.) What proof have we that such had been his character until now? or had ever been so? Is it said that he was chief among the publicans? And what then? The calling of a publican was as honest as that of a collector of the revenue in our own country. Are all our collectors roguish and oppressive? Is it said he was chief among the publicans? And what then? Are all those who farm the different branches of the revenue griping and dishonest men? Possibly there may now and then, here and there, be found a person of this sort; but shame cover the man who either says or thinks that every farmer of the revenue is given to unrighteous and oppressive conduct. And if we have no warrant so to speak or think of our modern collectors of the revenue, so neither have we of those of ancient times; less still have we of Zaccheus.

It will perhaps be said that this opinion of him has been gathered from the history; but remember that a very different, yea, and an honourable view of him too, has been collected of him from the self-same history; and which of these views of him is best supported by the narrative we shall see presently. It is indeed said—

(2.) That he was rich. But what right has any man to infer from this fact, that his wealth had been unrighteously accumulated? Is it said, because his office afforded him an opportunity of thus amassing property? Remember, that if we are to draw inferences after this manner, we shall turn the greater part of our honourable and most confidential public servants into downright villains.

We may venture to affirm too, that Zaccheus had not grown rich by oppression; for if more than one eighth of his property had been illegally acquired, he could not have done as verse the 8th says he had done, or was resolved to do; for, in that case, he would not have had a sufficiency of property to have enabled him to act thus, much less any left to subsist on.

(3.) It appears to us, that his anxiety to see Jesus may most reasonably be adduced in proof of the morality and piety of his character. It could scarcely spring from mere curiosity. Besides, his faith in Christ appears from the confession he made to him: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor," etc. Observe, "I give;" not, I will give. What but faith in Christ could have given rise to this practice and appeal? And that he had such faith in Christ, appears further from the testimony which the Saviour bore to him, verse 9: "This day," said he, "is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." But he had love to Christ, as well as faith in him; this appears from the haste he made down from the tree, at Christ's bidding, and the joy with which he received him: "And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully." We notice —

(4.) That he was saved by Christ: he was one of those lost sinners whom Jesus came to seek and save; and Jesus assigned the fact of his being saved as a reason for going to be his guest, unsolicited.

That he was saved, appears from the works alluded to, verse 8, which works (supposing him only to be resolved to do thenceforth) he could not possibly have done from that time, had he not been actually saved at the time. Besides, said the Saviour, "this day" is salvation come to this house; not, it shall come. But let us look at these works a little more: —

I. Let us look at his charity.

1. At its object, "the poor." He was not bent on enriching the church, so as to endanger its spirituality, purity, and usefulness. He did not resolve on becoming prodigal of the property he had gained, but to lay it out righteously and wisely.

2. Mark the amount of his charity. "The half of my goods I give to the poor." This is not a rule for others; but the New Testament does require much charity: as a proof of this, we refer you to the frequent and urgent manner in which this subject is pressed in the epistolatory part of it. And this also we have ob-

served, that the more grace any man has, the more is his heart disposed to it. And observe—

3. That as soon, and in proportion as the love of Christ enters the heart, the love of money departs thence; these cannot co-exist in the same heart. “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.” And yet how many professors of religion are there, who will be rich! But—

II. Let us look at his restitution.

When a man is truly converted, if he has wronged any man, this is one of the first things that is attended to; and if any man has lost, though he has not been wronged by him, if he shall ever have it in his power to repair the injury, he will do so: he will not act as many bankrupts do, break, to prosper more in business afterwards, and never think of discharging old debts.

Observe, his own memory did not remind him of any wrong that he had done. But if any one could refresh his treacherous memory, by bringing such an act of fraudulence home to him, he was resolved—

1. To make restitution to the party injured. Not to sanctify his ill gotten gain by giving it to the poor, unless he found himself unable to do it to the party injured. Not to give it to the church, and thus get a name for liberality by the concealment of his villany. Not offering robbery for a burnt offering. The Jews, corrupt as they were, would not allow the price of Judas’s treachery to go into the treasury: and surely every offering to God should be without blemish and without spot. But—

2. He was resolved to restore fourfold. The law required this, and one-fifth more with a trespass offering, in cases of voluntary restitution; and fourfold, when legally convicted. And let it not be overlooked that—

3. Every man who makes this his rule, will be very cautious not to do wrong, as the cost would be more than the profit.

IMPROVEMENT.

Notice 1. That Zaccheus was saved in the way in

which all sinners have been, are, and must be saved, and that is by faith in Christ.

Notice 2. No sinner can be saved, that does not, according to his circumstances, resolve first to make restitution, and then to be charitable.

Notice 3. That if you will make up your minds on this point now, salvation will this day come to your house and heart.

SKETCH IV.

“AND as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Matt. xxvi. 26—28.)

WHOEVER admits the right of wisdom to advise, must for the same reason admit the right of authority to command; and if that counsel which is dictated by wisdom ought to be obeyed, still more ought those commands to be obeyed, that proceed from due authority.

On these principles let us judge of the passage before us. Here is —

I. As plain a command of the Saviour delivered to his disciples, as is to be found within the compass of the Bible; and of so much importance was this command thought to be, as to be most solemnly reiterated. “For I have received,” said St. Paul, 1 Corinthians xi. 23—26, “of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner he took the cup when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he

come." From the expressions which close this quotation, it is evident, that this commandment is to be accounted as of perpetual obligation.

It deserves also to be remembered, that the command refers more to the wine in the sacrament, than the bread, as it is the blood which maketh atonement for our life, and not the flesh.

2. This is not only the injunction of one whose right to command we readily acknowledge, but also, one of the last charges of our dying Saviour; and, if any of his precepts may be traced up to his love for us, this surely is one of them. The slightest reflection on its nature, and on the honour and advantage which it confers, must convince us of this; and, as it springs from Christ's love to us, so is it a most powerful appeal to our love to him: can those have any love for Christ, who live in the habitual neglect of this, his dying mandate? Impossible!

3. This is a most important, as well as the dying direction of our Lord.

(1.) It is what the Jewish passover only prefigured; and yet he who neglected the celebration of the figure, was to bear his sin, and to be cut off from among his people. (Num. ix. 13.) What then must be the punishment adjudged to the sin of neglecting the thing prefigured? For remember —

(2.) What was but figuratively done on the great day of atonement, was really done by Christ when he hung upon the cross; his blood was shed for many, for the remission of sins; not only the sins of the whole Jewish nation, but for the sins of the whole world. If he then was judged worthy of being destroyed, who condemned the figurative institution, and was devoted to destruction accordingly; much more must he be accounted as fit for destruction, and appointed to it, who shall trample under foot the blood of the covenant, by lightly esteeming that sacrament, which perpetually sets it forth. Observe —

(3.) Our Lord says, "Drink ye all of it." Hence all the first christians did so; for "they continued sted-

fastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts ii. 42.) "And on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached," etc. (Acts xx. 7.) "When ye come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper," etc. (1 Cor. xi. 20.) Thus evident is it that the first christians observed this precept of their dying Master. And now allow me —

II. To ask, why do you not respect and keep this dying charge of Jesus Christ ?

1. Do you think it unessential ? Do you say that you will not be sent to hell for disregarding it ? In what light would you view that servant, who would do nothing, unless he were first threatened with death if he did it not ? Would you keep such a servant ? Would you think him deserving of being kept ? Surely you would account such an one to be a slothful and wicked servant, deserving to be bound hand and foot, and to be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Why —

2. Do you not observe your Master's dying charge ?

Do you plead that you are not prepared ? And why are you not ? Is it for want of instruction ? or for want of help ? Surely you will not dare to say that. Or —

Do you say, that you dread the punishment of those who receive it unworthily ; and that this is the reason, why you do not come to the table of the Lord ? But are you not aware, that there are judgments connected with the abuse of other ordinances, as well as this ? As, for instance, hearing the word : "Hear ye, indeed, but understand not ; and see ye, indeed, but perceive not." (Isaiah vi. 9, and Mark iv. 10—12.) "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish ; to the one, we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other, the savour of life unto life." (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.) Praying also, has judgment connected with its abuse : "Let his prayer become sin." (Psalm cix. 7.) If, then, you neglect

the dying charge of your Master, for fear of being punished for the abuse of it; why do you not refrain from prayer, and from hearing the word, for the same reason? But—

3. Why do you neglect the dying charge of your divine Master?

Do you say that you are not a member of his family, and, therefore, have no right to come to the ordinance? But why are you not a member of his family? Has he debarred you from becoming one? Has he not rather invited you to do so? Has he ever refused to admit any into it, who sought admission on proper terms?

Is not the true reason of your neglect of this charge, to be sought in your unwillingness fully to obey your Lord? Some come to the Lord's table begging a morsel of bread; we do not refuse them; but all such as esteem this bread, should become members of his church, and so secure to themselves a right to partake of it.

SKETCH V.

“WHOSOEVER therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” (Mark viii. 38.)

AND have any such persons ever existed? O yes, the world has been full of such characters, since the advent of the Redeemer; yea, and the church of Christ itself, has had but too many such within its pale, since that period.

And at this moment, there are those in the visible church who are —

I. Ashamed of Christ. And —

(1.) They are ashamed of his person as man. Had he as man been born of respectable parents, and made a figure in the world, there had been nothing to be ashamed of; but being of such extraction, and so de-

spicable in his condition and followers, they think that they may well be ashamed of him.

And yet what insufferable pride would it be, for any man to be ashamed, or to think less favourably of his fellow man, because he happened to descend from parents in the lower ranks of life. Had his parents brought themselves into their low condition by their vices, it had been to their discredit to be in them, not else.

And yet, even then, none but a proud and ignorant man would think the worse of a child, because born of vicious parents, unless itself were vicious; it would rather be entitled to pity and respect.

But Christ was entitled to true and great respect, as far as either his parents or his own character could give a claim to it; they were virtuous and amiable, though poor; and so was he. Very different was Mahomet's character from his.

(2.) Some are ashamed of him as a priest.

Had he as a priest been splendidly attired, as were the pagan and the Jewish priests; and had he had numerous and costly victims and offerings to present to God, then had there been no reason to be ashamed of him as a priest; but without anything in his attire that suited the dignity of his pretended office, and without anything to offer to God in the way of sacrifice, except his own body and life, that were reputed to have been forfeited to justice by his violation of the laws, it did appear to some that they had reason to be ashamed of him.

And yet, reflecting on the spirituality and perfection of his priesthood, and on the innocence, purity, and perfection of his life, the circumstance of his offering himself on the cross, was no just cause for shame; he was not ashamed of it, but despised its shame: and shall not we? (See verses 31—33.)

(3.) Some are ashamed of him as a prophet.

And so they justly might be, were his mission either unattested, or not properly so; or had he predicted things that were falsified by the event, or pretended to a revelation not more than ordinarily important.

But surely a mission attested by miracles so numerous, mighty, and merciful, and by predictions so exactly verified, and leading to a disclosure of a body of truth of infinite importance to every human being, could be no just cause for shame.

(4.) Some too are ashamed, strange to say it, of his divinity.

Had he been like to many, or indeed to any, not accepting the best of the heathen gods, if there are any which are better than the rest, then might we justly have been ashamed of him; but seeing his claims to divinity are so irrefragable, and the emanations of his glory so abundant and overwhelming, we see not how any laying claim to rationality can be ashamed of him. There are, we know, some who call themselves rational christians, and who assume this title, because they deny this article of our faith; but how far they deserve this title for disbelieving and denying this doctrine, which is so expressly taught in the christian scriptures, let the church and the world itself judge. But —

II. There are some who are ashamed of Christ's words.

(1.) Some are ashamed of his doctrines, as that of salvation by faith. Salvation on any other principle, would have shut the door against the base, and have left room for a proud distinction between the less and more deserving.

The doctrine of sanctification by the Spirit too, has something in it so mystical and fanatical, and is so generally considered as excessive and unnecessary, that not a few are ashamed of it. But is the doctrine of faith to be despised, because it places the salvation of God within the reach of all? Or is the doctrine of sanctification to be lightly esteemed, because corrupt and vile men think it unnecessary and excessive? Or is it less deserving of belief, because we cannot comprehend its process? Surely no man capable of weighing these remarks will say so.

(2.) Some are ashamed of Christ's code of morals, because it is not cast into a regularly distributed and

systematic form, and is not set forth in pompous distinctions and high sounding phrases.

But where shall we find a complete body of instruction on moral subjects, that has so little in it to burden the memory, and to perplex the judgment, and so much that is of the easiest application, and that so thoroughly imbues the mind with sound principles, and the heart with moral feeling? Certainly we ought not to be ashamed of this code, but to glory in it.

(3.) Some are ashamed of particular expressions employed by him.

For instance: the words saint and perfect have been a cause for shame: but surely when these are rightly interpreted, and explained in accordance with the word of God at large, we see no reason to be ashamed of them. Let those, however, who are ashamed of Christ know —

III. That to be ashamed of him is an adulterous and sinful act, and identifies us with the adulterous and sinful generation in which the Saviour lived.

That generation to which these words were addressed, could not be accounted adulterous for joining the worship of the true God with that of idols, as had formerly been the case with the Jewish church; but it was adulterous in withholding from him that pure and perfect worship which it was bound to render to him, and in giving its affections to an imaginary messiah, not the true one, and in not holding itself professedly in readiness to receive and extend his kingdom.

And as far as it was an adulterous, it was a sinful generation.

And as far as it had been favoured with peculiar mercies, it was peculiarly sinful in abusing them.

And was it peculiar to that generation to abuse the mercies of God? O that it had been so! O that there were none this day involved in this guilt! But, alas! the sin is now awfully prevalent. But because the generation in which we live is adulterous, and ashamed of him, shall we be so? God forbid! But we shall be so accounted of, if —

(1.) We do not confess him as the Saviour in

whom we trust, whom we love, and to whom we determine to adhere. This is not to cast our pearls before swine, but to act as the apostles did.

(2.) We shall be considered as ashamed of him, if we only talk of religion when we are with religious people, and are silent on the subject when we are with worldly people, though we do not laugh at it. Such conduct will demonstrate our cowardice, in not daring to profess it before all, if it do not also prove our deceit and wickedness in daring to join the mass of the rebellious in the manifestation of their hostility.

(3.) If we confess him not, we shall justly be considered as ashamed of him; seeing no man can hide his religion, when he is with the wicked, without a sinful compliance with them: he must join in card playing, song singing, drinking, pleasure taking, and such like things, or at once declare himself. And let it —

IV. Be remembered, that all those who are now ashamed of Christ, of them will he be ashamed, when, as judge of all, he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels. As judge of quick and dead, he will assuredly come again. (Acts xvii. 31.) And when he shall come in this character, and for this purpose, he will come in this glory. (Matt. xvi. 27.) And then, none will be ashamed of him, when the meanness, the insignificance, and the suffering to which for a season he submitted, out of love to us, shall have all been laid aside, and all the tokens of majesty assumed in their stead.

And then none will be afraid of him, but those who were ashamed of him here; for those who confessed him here, will then exult to see him; while those who here disowned him, and all that were ashamed of him in their generations, shall be disowned of him, and doomed to everlasting contempt and punishment.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Christ's followers must be courageous in confessing him, and ready to lay down their lives in

making that confession, if required to do so; as the fearful will be ranked with the unbelieving, and delivered to death.

2. Let all professing christians see that they be not a shame to the gospel, as his disciples are required to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things.

3. Be it remembered that the bold confession of the Saviour is to be one grand means of the world's conversion to God.

SKETCH VI.

“HE shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” (Psaln cxii. 7.)

MANY are professedly and apparently fearless of evil tidings, who have every reason to be afraid of them; and there are others who, though they fear such tidings greatly, have no reason whatever to do so; for had they but right views of their state, and of their relation to the Lord, their hearts would be fixed, trusting in the Lord. Observe—

I. The steady dependence of a good man upon the Lord. “His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.”

1. He is fully aware that he is not entitled to trust his God for anything, and therefore will have no inclination to do it, unless he has previously intrusted him with everything.

He has no warrant to intrust so much as his body to God, unless he has first intrusted him with his soul.

And the reason or warrant we have for trusting God with our souls is, repentance on our part, and the promise of pardon on his part.

And this warrant is sufficient for all men, not excepting the very worst, seeing all are commanded to repent, and therefore may repent; while the promise of pardon through the blood of Christ is made to all that do repent.

All who have trusted God with their souls, have suf-

ficient warrant to trust him with their bodies, and for all they may want both for body and soul; and yet how many of those who profess to have intrusted him with the care of their souls, are incapable of trusting him either with or for the body!

Let it, however, be observed, that he whose soul is saved, will willingly submit to any condition his God may think it proper to place him in. "Make me as one of thy hired servants," said the prodigal; I shall be content, and glad; it will be infinitely better than I deserve.

And observe too, that this trusting of God with all we have, and for all we want, will not make us careless in the arrangement of our affairs, or in our conduct; for as we read in verse 5, "Such an one will guide his affairs with discretion," he will not run beyond his means. But his trust —

2. Is not more enlightened and consistent than steady and determined; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His trust is not capricious, fickle, sudden, or unstable; on the contrary, he has maturely weighed the subject, is fully convinced that it is his duty and interest to trust in him, and therefore he is determined to trust in him under the darkest dispensations, assured that light and help will be afforded to him. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," for "unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness." (Job. xiii. 15; Psalm cxii. 4.)

Indeed, to this satisfied, settled, and fixed state of heart it is that the good man —

II. Is indebted for his deliverance from the fear of evil tidings or reports.

One commentator says, he shall not suffer from the calumny and detraction of the wicked; but this is going too far; for what innocence can shield us from this? Did not the Saviour himself suffer from this quarter? Yet after all, what is it that the wicked can do unto us? May not the man who trusts in God say as David, (Psalm xxvii. 1.) "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is

the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" Because of his relation to the Lord, and of what God is to him, he has no need to fear, and no room to do so. For —

1. God is able and engaged to make all things work together for his good, even the most unpromising events and things that can befall him.

Is the bank broken, in which his property was deposited? Not so the bank of heaven.

Is the ship, in which most of his earthly treasure was embarked, gone down? His heavenly treasure is safe, and in no danger of being lost.

Is the market glutted, to which his goods have been sent? But the treasure he has sent to heaven shall be returned with interest.

His earthly agent may have cheated him; but he need not fear that God will do this.

2. Should any be opposed to him for the sake of his piety and righteousness, and on this account seek to injure him, he may safely confide the preservation of his person and interests to God; for when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him: "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is in me, saith the Lord." (Isaiah liv. 17.)

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Take heed that ye fear the Lord and delight in his commandments greatly, yea, be ye upright before him; for all such shall abide, and their seed shall be mighty in the earth. (Verses 2, 6.) But —

2. Forget not to trust in him, for it is only as the heart is fixed, trusting in him, that we can reasonably expect good at his hands.

SKETCH VII.

“BUT ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.” (2 Thess. iii. 13.)

YES, it is an easy thing for such as are not pressed with difficulties and distresses, to give this advice; but were they involved in them, could they take it? Would they not be as others? Perhaps so; but, after all, it is not what they would be, were their circumstances changed, but what they might, and therefore ought to be, in trials, straits, and distresses.

Is there any reason why tried and distressed persons should become weary in well doing? If not, then should we guard against all tendency to such an evil; and gladly avail ourselves of every help to ward it off: perseverance in a right course is what all should be determined on; and that must necessarily be a right course, that can justly be designated well doing. Here observe —

I. That the great business of a christian in this world is to do well, and that —

1. For himself; and to do this it is necessary, first of all, to make his own salvation sure, which can only be done by seeking deliverance from the power, the guilt, and the pollution of his own sin, and by keeping himself in this liberty to the end of life.

But whoever would attain to this salvation, and thus retain it, must examine the gospel, embrace it, resolve unreservedly to obey it, cast himself humbly but unhesitatingly on God's promised mercy in Christ, looking to God in the use of all the ordinances for power to live agreeably to his mind and will.

But let it be remembered, that as far as any man has done well for himself, having secured his own salvation, he will and must —

2. Be concerned to do good to others, and to all, for so is he commanded: “As we have opportunity

let us do good unto all men ; especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Religion is not selfish, but continually counterworks and destroys that selfishness which is natural to man. When such a man discovers any new source of gain and wealth, he is wishful to keep the discovery to himself. Not so the man of God ; on finding and proving the blessedness of religion, he cries to his neighbour man, " O taste and see that the Lord is good." " Come thou with us, and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." And it is not in religion only, that he is willing to do them good, and share his blessings with them, though it is the first point in which he is anxious to serve them ; for as far as he possesses the ability, he endeavours to promote their temporal interests and prosperity : in short, he is wishful to do to others as he would be done unto by them.

He lives to do good, and that not to his friends only, but to his foes also ; for if his enemy hungers, he feeds him ; if he is thirsty, he gives him drink ; thus, after the example of his heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust, heaping coals of fire on his head.

If there is any man on earth who can be said to be the servant of all, it is the man of God ; for to do good, and to communicate, he forgets not ; knowing that with such sacrifices, God is well pleased.

But though the spiritual and perfect man has such pleasure in well doing, yet there is, as we must —

II. Perceive, there is both a possibility and a danger of becoming weary in well doing. We endanger our perseverance in this course by —

1. Perplexing ourselves with difficulties. We are sometimes puzzling ourselves to pry into and fathom those hidden and deep things, which the scriptures say belong to God : but most vain is the attempt, as we are utterly incompetent to search them out, and cannot even attempt it, without cherishing a curiosity which we ought to repress, without sinfully prostituting our

precious time, and without inducing a frame of spirit that is most unfavourable to our growth in piety, and even to our stability in grace.

At other times we are perplexing ourselves to find out which sect is right, as if there were but one that is so. Were there but one sect right, we should have difficulty in finding it. If the oldest sect is to claim this honour, the Greek church will have it. If the largest sect, then the Arian sect, as it existed in the third century. But a christian is the servant of Christ, not a sectary; and, therefore, it is Christ, not any sect, that must save him. And Christ may be served in different churches, just as the same master may be served in different fields; or as the same sovereign may be served by the same good subject, in different towns and corporations.

And sometimes we are harassing and tormenting our minds by an over scrupulous attention to some trivial matters in practice, to the neglect of matters far more important, and which we know to be thus important; thus "straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel." If we are at a loss on some minor points, we should let them alone for awhile, and attend to those of which we are in no doubt. And if in any case of doubt, there is a necessity for our acting, let us act to the best of our knowledge and leave it.

2. Some endanger their perseverance in well doing by overdoing. They set themselves tasks which God has not required of them, and vow that they will do what God has neither commanded nor advised: thus these persons ensnare themselves, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

3. Others there are who endanger their continuance in well doing, by indulging in gloomy and fearful apprehensions. Some are constitutionally disposed to this, and some, through the power of bodily disease; but whencesoever this tendency arises, it is not only troublesome, but pernicious in its effects, and must be guarded against. What business have I to be looking forever at myself, instead of looking to Christ? Or

what right have I to be foreboding evil, who am called on to rejoice alway in the Lord ?

4. But more become weary in well doing through yielding to temptation and to sin, which never fail to make us weary, when they are indulged. Get rid of sin, and resist temptation, and duty will be delightful.

5. Some become weary through not aspiring after and living up to their privilege. They do not press to a conscious enjoyment of the favour and fellowship of God, and to the abounding joy of the Holy Ghost ; and yet these are the things that are to animate us in our christian course. And —

6. Some become weary in well doing by restraining prayer before God, and so lack that strength which God alone can supply, but who will not give it to prayerless souls, any more than to unbelieving ones. And —

That we may not become weary in well doing, let us in the —

III. Place, give heed to the apostle's counsel: "Be ye not weary in well doing." Here observe —

1. It was not a matter of doubt whether or not these Thessalonian christians were doing well, at the time when these words were addressed to them. They had not only obeyed the command of God in reference to their own salvation, as both the Epistles directed to them clearly show ; but the context shows that they were ministering those supplies to their poor fellow members which christian charity scarcely called for. There were some among them who were needy, and who were so because they were too idle to labour for their bread. These were whiling away their time in prying into other men's affairs ; busy bodies, busying themselves with every body's business but their own, to the great discredit of religion, and of annoyance to the church. But rather than these Thessalonian christians should be discouraged, and cease to exercise this blessed charity, because some of their fellow members were undeserving of and abused it, he would have them continue their charity to these unworthy objects, and mingle the exercise of wholesome discipline along with it.

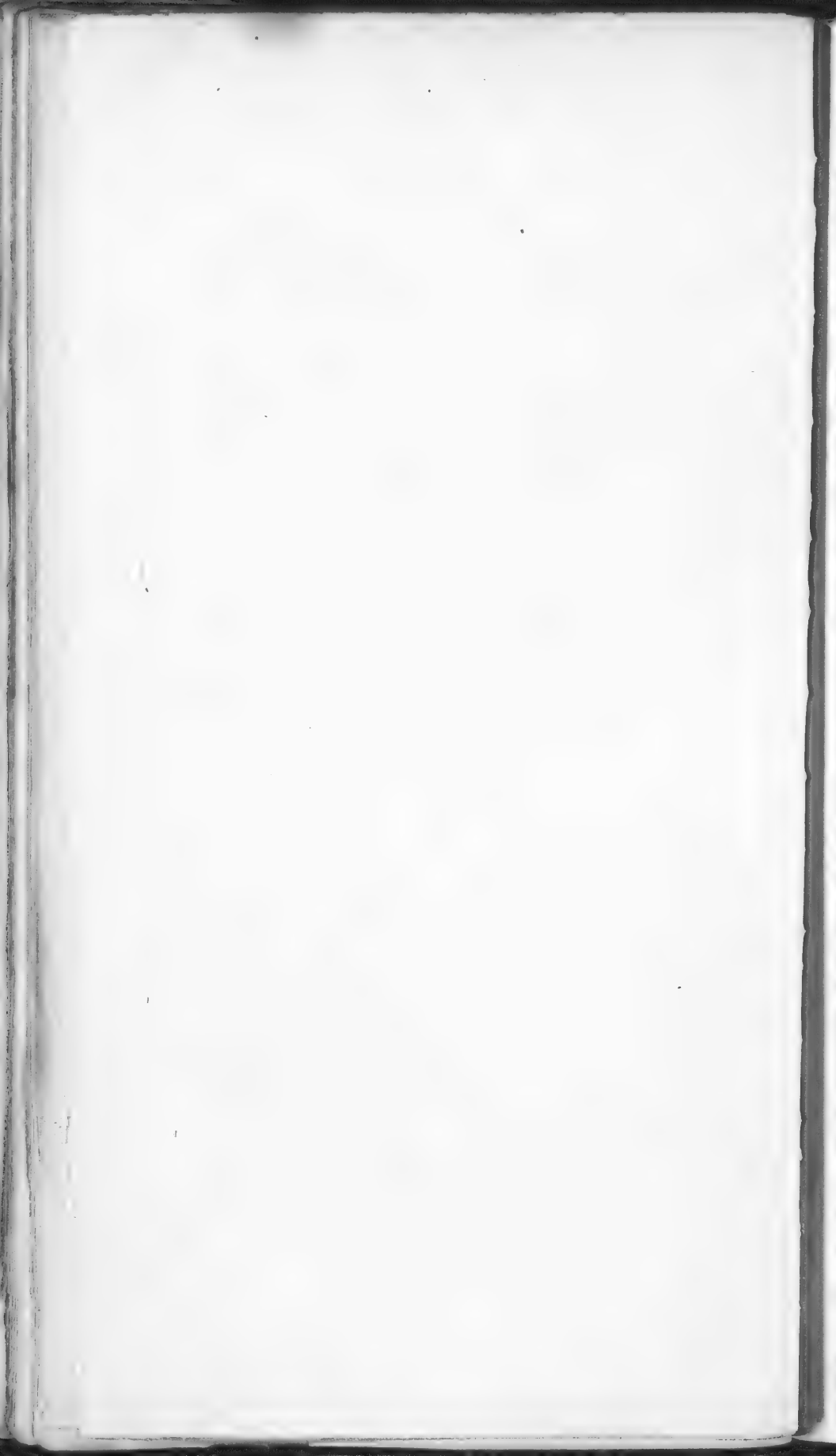
It behoves us also to ascertain that we are doing well. Let us not be content with having the reputation of doing well, nor yet with our own unauthorised hope that we are doing well; but let us search into the matter, and be certified that we have made a right beginning. And then —

2. Let us not be weary; that is, not faint under toil, not yield to fatigue, not lose our courage, and so despair of holding out; for in such a case we shall lose all that has been suffered, endured, and done.

3. Let us not be weary, for there is no necessity it should be so; God is willing to strengthen us, and waiting to do so.

4. Be ye not weary in well doing, as that would stumble many, bring religion into disrepute with many more, who are just turning their attention to it, and who would, in such a case, turn from it with disgust. And —

5. Be ye not weary in well doing, as in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not. Whenever you feel particularly pressed, think of the end of your labours, how certain and how near it is, and cheer up.



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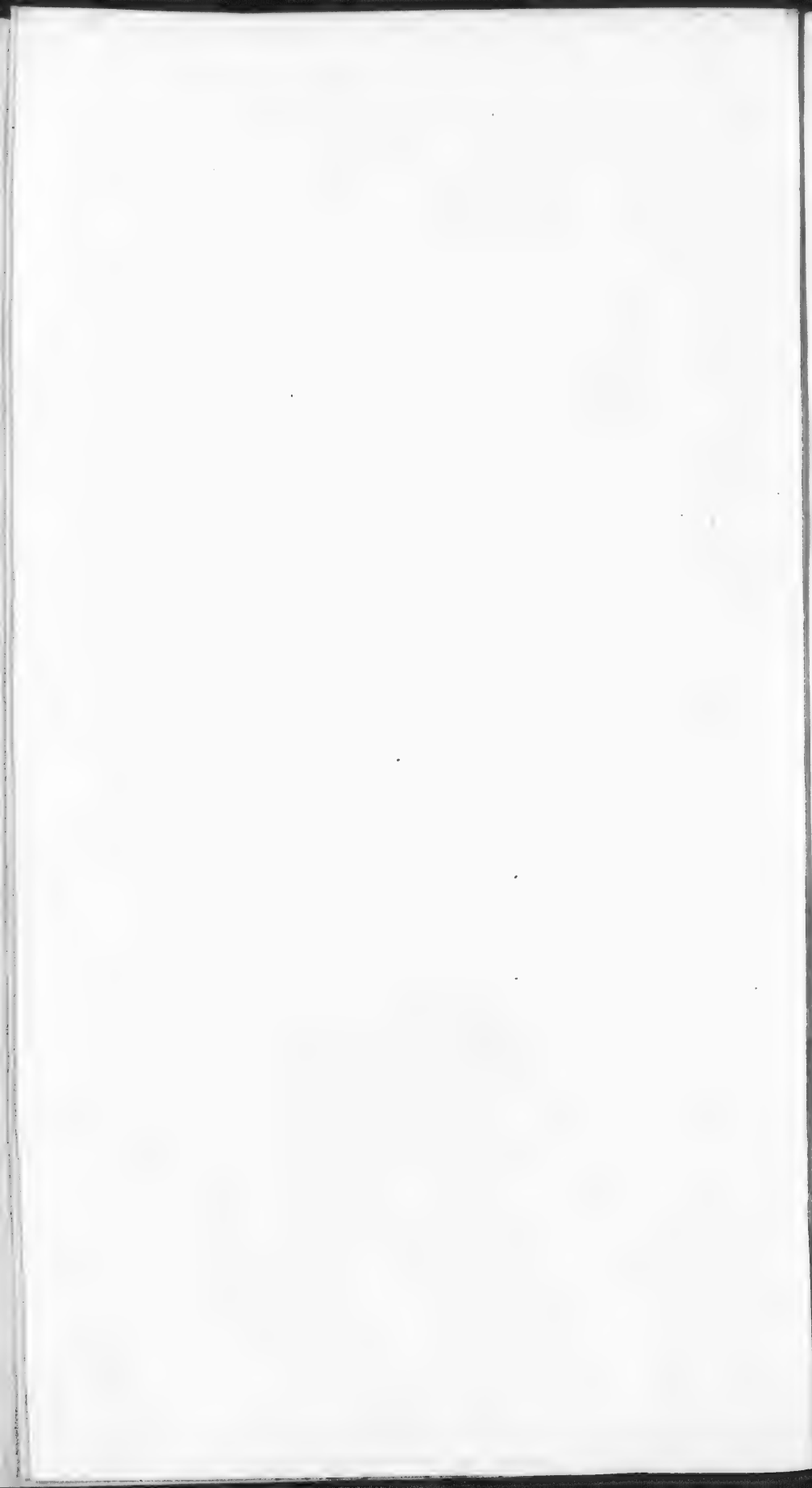
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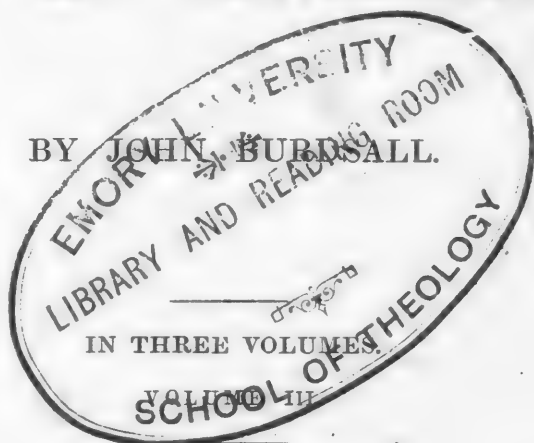
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BY JOHN BURDSALL.



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PREFACE.

THE works of the Rev. Daniel Isaac being now by the blessing of God brought to a close, it rests with the christian public, and with the Wesleyan Methodists in particular to say, whether they think them deserving of republication or not, and of having those additions made to them, that are now published for the first time. For his own part, the Editor cannot forbear saying, that in whatever light these Works may be viewed by others, he has been amply repaid for any trouble he has taken, which has not been a little, in collecting, transcribing, and preparing them for the press. And, after all the pains he has taken, he is sensible that he will stand in much need of the candour and forbearance of the public, owing to his great distance from his printer, and to the circumstance that he has never had a second proof-sheet of any part of the works pass through his hands. And when, in addition to these disadvantages, his incompetency for such an under-

taking, compared with that of many of his brethren, is taken into the account, he cannot but cherish the hope that the public will grant him every indulgence in its power.

Some, a little more scrutinizing, may be inclined to ask, but why did he undertake the preparation of these Works for the press, if so conscious of his incompetency for the work? Simply because he was pressed into it by some who thought better of his abilities than he himself did. He is not, however, without a hope that the Works will be found more worthy of public patronage than ever, on account of their neatness and uniformity, their greater correctness, their cheapness, and the important additions made to them. Besides, now the Works, and the Memoirs of Mr. Isaac, by the Rev. James Everett, may be had in the same size, and much the same in quality, making four handsome duodecimo volumes.

Nothing can ever bring the Editor of these works to think that any of them are unimportant. Of great moment they most of them were thought to be, both by the Author and by others, at the time of their publica-

tion. And though the events which gave some of them so much interest at their first appearing are now gone by, it is to be hoped never to return,—and, consequently, though so much is now taken from the interest they then had ; yet still, they are very valuable, as documentary evidence of occurrences in which we shall ever feel a melancholy concern. By far the greater part of them, however, retain all the importance they ever had ; while some of them, from the complexion of the times in which we live, have greatly increased in value. This is the case with the Ecclesiastical Claims. Such also is the case with his Essay on the Rule of Faith, that on the Idolatry of the Church of Rome, and those on the Moral Government of God, and on the Atonement. These, if the Editor is not greatly mistaken, will live as long as there shall be found any enemies of our God and of his faith to urge the objections that are referred to and combated in the Works, and so long as any shall be found on earth capable of admiring, pondering, and feeling the truths and arguments advanced in them.

The Editor is not so charmed with his Author, as to be blinded to his imperfections ; he is, therefore, far from

considering the productions of his pen as faultless. And were the reverend Author now alive, he is fully persuaded that he would have exchanged some uncouth and offensive expressions found in his Works, for others more polished and inoffensive ; and would have guarded some parts of his productions from misconstruction and abuse, that were very liable to both. But that he would at all have abated or taken from the force of those great points for which he so strenuously contended, or have lowered his sails in compliment to any who were placing the principles and liberties of christianity in jeopardy, the Editor can never be induced to believe. On the contrary, he is fully of opinion, that it would have been the Author's endeavour to have strengthened all such positions to the uttermost of his power. No man ever was of a more uncompromising turn than Mr. Isaac, when he thought that any great christian principle or interest was at stake ; nor any man more fearless and determined when called upon to fight the battles of the Lord. In every such case, he came up boldly and promptly to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mightiest of his adversaries. But until he was convinced that the cause of God was thus endangered, no man was ever

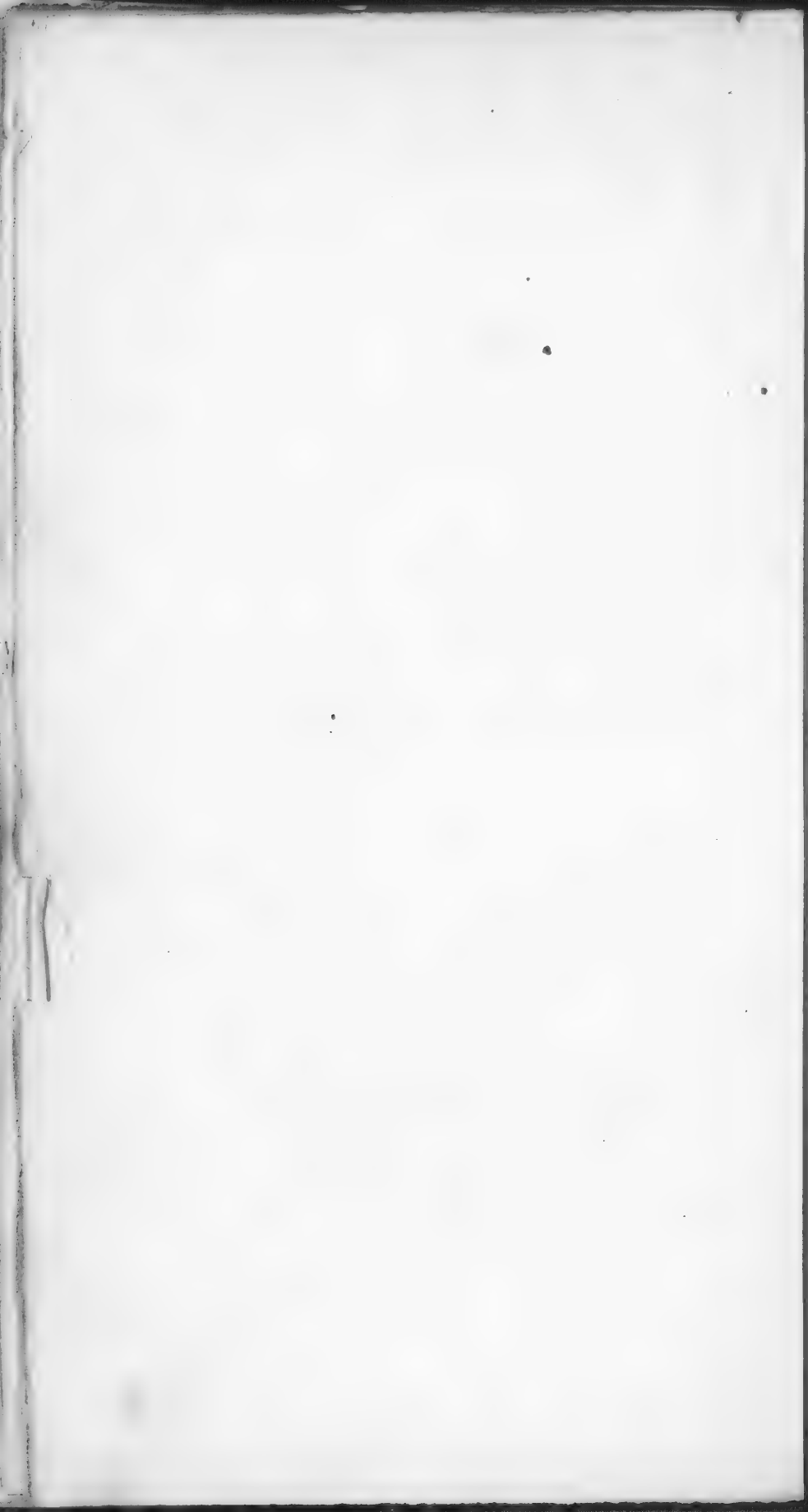
more inclined to keep the peace. And being of a peaceable disposition himself, and innocently playful in the use of his great logical and satirical powers, it was always much more pleasant to him to entertain and profit, than to contend with any of his species, particularly with those whom he considered good and virtuous. Like every good soldier, he was perfectly patient and calm, till fairly pitted with an adversary; and even then, his christian dignity and generosity never forsook him, nor did they ever lose their proper influence over him. What a calamity would it be if the Works of such a mind, and of such a man, should ever want either purchasers or readers, while there is any such thing as mind or money in existence!

The Editor is not ignorant that several little, petty things have risen up in connexion with the Author and his Works, that have infected the minds of some, affecting to be his friends, with the jaundice,—insomuch that everything has been done that could have been, without direct and open opposition, to prevent their admission into the Wesleyan market. But, deeply must that mind be imbued with prejudice, that cannot find both enjoyment and advantage in the careful

and reiterated perusal of them, or that can depreciate them, or allow them to be depreciated in its presence, without doing its best both to defend and recommend them.

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ESSAY ON THE ATONEMENT.



ESSAY ON THE ATONEMENT.

SECTION I.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT ANSWERED.

I AM fully aware that it is contrary to general practice to undertake the answering of objections to a doctrine, before the proofs of that doctrine have been adduced; but my reasons for adopting this course are—(1.) In answering objections, an opportunity is afforded for giving a full view of the doctrine, by a greater variety of illustrations. Too many controvertists enter on the proof of a doctrine, before they have explained it. (2.) By first answering objections, prejudices are removed, and the mind is prepared to feel the full force of evidence when it is offered. To prove the doctrine, before you have removed the prejudices which are cherished in the mind against it, will be but labour in vain. For instance: a person who is persuaded that the doctrine of atonement is contrary to the justice of God, will not be moved by any direct proof, because he will say it is impossible to prove that God is unjust. You must, therefore, show him that the doctrine in question is not opposed to divine justice; if you succeed in this point, you remove his prejudices, and prepare his mind to attend to the direct proof which you may then produce with effect. I shall, therefore, enter on my work of removing the rubbish which the Socinians have heaped around the temple of truth, and give you a view of it in its native beauty and grandeur: when this is done, it will be an

easy task to persuade you that its builder and maker is God.

It is said that if the justice of the substitution of Christ in the stead of sinners be allowed, it must follow, that sinners ought not to be punished, it being manifestly unjust to punish both the principal and the substitute for the same offence. But many of the advocates of orthodoxy (among whom is the writer of this article) maintain, that though Christ satisfied divine justice for the sins of all men, yet many will be punished in hell forever for their sins.

There would be considerable weight in this objection, if sinners had provided the substitute; but that was not the case. The Sovereign of heaven provided the sacrifice, and the victim freely offered himself. The Father and the Son were perfectly agreed that the object of the Son's sufferings was not to set aside moral obligation, but to strengthen it, and to furnish sinners with the means of becoming virtuous and happy in a way consistent with the demands of law, and the dignity of the divine government. Now in this affair, where is the injustice? Not to the sovereign as the guardian of the law; for the law is satisfied. Not to the substitute, for he suffered voluntarily, and agreed that the benefit of his death to the offenders should be suspended on the condition of repentance, faith, and obedience. Not to the offenders, for neither the substitute nor the sovereign were under any obligation to grant them an unconditional pardon: its being offered on such easy terms was an act of grace, and their not accepting of it rendered them justly liable to punishment. When there is no injustice to any of the parties, there is no injustice in the transaction.

What gives objections of this nature the appearance of argument is, their reference to human affairs. If my surety has satisfied the demands of my creditor in my stead, it would clearly be unjust in the creditor to cast me into prison afterwards for the self-same debt. In cases of this kind, the surety is generally procured at the earnest entreaty of the debtor; the surety is

supposed to care nothing about the creditor, but to be influenced merely by a principle of compassion for the debtor; and the creditor is not recognized as a moral governor, who has any right of interference with the subsequent conduct of the debtor. Thus the objection is taken from a case which differs in every particular from the one to which it is applied.

Amongst men, when a debt is freely forgiven, it would be as unjust to cast the debtor afterwards into prison for it, as to make him answerable for the debt after it had been paid by his surety. Read Matthew xviii. 23—35. "The kingdom of heaven," or God's dealings with men, is there "likened to a certain king which would take account of his servants." One was brought to him who owed ten thousand talents, and "he had not to pay." The man humbled himself, and his lord was moved with compassion, and forgave him the debt. He had no sooner received this act of kindness, than he ill-treated a fellow servant. After expostulating the matter with him, "his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him." Now mark our Lord's application of this case to the apostles, who were undoubtedly in a pardoned state: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Socinians do not deny, that when a man embraces the gospel and becomes virtuous, he is forgiven his past sins, and that should he afterwards relapse into sin, and die in that state, he will have to answer at the day of judgment for his former sins which had been pardoned; and they never can show the justice of this procedure while they look upon God merely as a creditor and man as a debtor. No; but they can view God as a moral governor, when they want to remove difficulties from their own scheme; and we beg leave to remind them that on the very same principle, we can remove their difficulties from ours.

But further : if it be true what Socinians suppose, that by becoming virtuous, a man satisfies all the demands of justice in reference to his past misconduct, it would be the height of injustice, let his subsequent behaviour be ever so bad, to punish that past misconduct again. If a judge be disposed to remit the penalty of the law, he may exact conditions of the offender, to which, if he agree, he may be forgiven ; but should he afterwards fail to perform the conditions on which pardon was extended to him, he will be justly exposed to the penalty again. So in the case of a substitute : as substitution is supposed to be a voluntary act, the substitute has a right to stipulate with the offender ; and though we suppose the magistrate is not obliged to accept the substitute, he may have the right to oblige the offender to observe the stipulations which he has agreed to ; and should he violate them, he may justly inflict the original penalty upon him. But if the offender himself make satisfaction for his past crimes, it would be absolutely unjust in the magistrate to punish him afterwards for those crimes. Should he subsequently commit fresh crimes, for them he might be justly punished, but not for the former ones, for which he had already made satisfaction. And yet our Lord has taught us, in the passage above considered, that if a man turn from his righteousness, he shall be punished for his former sins. Thus the weapons of our opponents are turned against themselves.

It is objected again triumphantly, that in point of fact, Christ did not suffer the penalty of law, if that penalty be eternal punishment ; for his sufferings terminated in the course of a few hours. We admit that the sinner deserves eternal punishment, and that Christ was not subjected to eternal punishment. But why ? Not because any part of the penalty was remitted to him ; but because he was able to bear and survive that stroke of justice which would have proved fatal to the whole human race. The ability of Christ to bear punishment is a matter of great importance in this controversy. Amongst men there is a great difference

in the strength of their constitutions, as there is in their pecuniary circumstances. A rich man could raise a sum of money without inconvenience, the want of which might subject many a poor debtor to perpetual imprisonment. So a man of a strong constitution will endure as much labour and fatigue as would prove fatal to many sickly persons. If we draw the comparison between the ability of different creatures, the difference is still more striking. A stroke that would make a thousand flies expire under the most excruciating tortures, would scarcely produce the slightest sensation of pain in man; and there is a greater difference between the ability of Jesus Christ and other men, than between men and flies, to endure suffering.

I know that our opponents deny the divinity of Jesus Christ; but that important doctrine has been so often and so fully proved, that I shall here take it for granted. Now, then, assuming the divinity of our blessed Lord, we affirm that his humanity, sustained by his divinity, was able to endure and survive that stroke of justice which was sufficient to have overwhelmed a world of sinners in everlasting woe.

Nor let it be supposed that, upon this scheme, the divinity suffered. "God has promised to be with his people in trouble, and to support them." (Isaiah xliii. 2.) He has raised martyrs above the sense of pain, and made them triumph in the fire; but no one ever supposed that in supporting a suffering saint, the Deity ever felt any pain. If you ask, Is the Deity of Christ ever mentioned in connexion with his sufferings? I answer, yes,—in the following passages: Zech. xiii. 7, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd," my associate, saith Jehovah of Hosts. Surely the strong one, who is Jehovah's associate, is not a weak man, merely. The sword which Jehovah invokes against the shepherd could not be the Roman sword by which our Saviour was put to death; for Jehovah did not stir up the rulers against him. And that the passage relates to the sufferings of Christ is

certain, as two evangelists give it this application,—Matthew xxvi. 31; Mark xiv. 27.

1 John iii. 16 says, “Hereby perceive we,” etc. The words *toû Theou*, (of God,) are not in the original; hence our translators have been charged with passing a deception on the English reader. But this censure is unmerited. That some word must be supplied, in order to make sense of the passage, is agreed on all hands. Now God is the nearest antecedent; and in the following verse the love of God is mentioned in immediate reference to the text. Read both verses in connexion, “Hereby perceive we the love, because,” etc. The words, of God, must be supplied, and then the argument is clear. We perceive the love of God in dying for us, and we ought to imitate it in laying down our lives for the brethren, when called to it. If, therefore, we refuse to relieve a suffering brother, we cannot be inspired with that generous sentiment, the love of God. Supply the words, of Christ, and suppose him not to be the God mentioned in the following verse, as some critics do, and you will spoil the argument; for it is no proof that I am not inspired with the love of one person, because I do not imitate the conduct of another. The argument is lost if we introduce two persons. The apostle has named God in the latter clause, and has left the former blank; common sense, therefore, will supply the word which is wanting, as the translators have done. This apostle, in his gospel, gives our Lord the title of God; and if Christ be really God, there can be no more impropriety in saying that God laid down his life for us, than in saying that Christ laid down his life for us.

As to the import of the phrase, for us, as applied to the death of Christ, I shall inquire more particularly afterwards. It may suffice to say, that in this place, the connexion leads to the idea of substitution, or dying in our stead; because it is added, “and we ought,” etc. Life is the most valuable thing in the world; and as we are not required to love our neighbours better than ourselves, we cannot be required to

lay down our lives for the brethren unless their lives are at stake, and may be preserved by our dying for them.

I have assumed Jesus Christ to be a divine person, and not without evident warrant; for Hebrews i. 2, 3, says that "God hath spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things," etc. Here are several characters of divinity ascribed to Christ.

1. He made the worlds. By the worlds, the Socinians understand the ages; but we understand that the worlds were framed by THE WORD OF GOD, so that "things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb. xi. 2.) Here the sense in which the Son of God created worlds is explained; he brought visible worlds into existence out of nothing. "All things were created for him, as well as by him." (Col. i. 16.)

2. He sustains the universe. "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." "By him all things consist." (Col. i. 17.)

3. He governs the universe. He is "heir of all things." "The heir is Lord of all." (Gal. iv. 1.) This title implies universal dominion. I know it is objected that this title does not imply equality, but inferiority. It is thus interpreted: "By whom he," the Father, "made the worlds." "He," the Son, "upholdeth all things by the word of his," the Father's, "power." "He," the Father, "hath appointed," the Son, "heir of all things." But I deny that this language implies any inferiority in the Son to the Father. Let us suppose the names reversed; and yet Socinian ingenuity would find it easy to show that still the Son is inferior to the Father, "By whom," or by whose power, "he," the Son, "made the worlds;" that is, not by his own, but by the Father's power, he (the Son) made the worlds. "He," the Father, "upholdeth all things by the word of his," the Son's, "power." Just the same as a master is said to do anything by the physical strength of his servant; but servants are not put upon an equality with their employers. "He," the Son, "hath appointed," the

Father, "heir," or Lord, "of all things;" that is, though the Son be sometimes complimented with the name of God, yet conscious of his inability to do the works of God, he did not aspire to the government of the universe, but left that to the Father. We all know how common it is in the world for men to appoint others to do what they cannot do themselves.

If my system required it, I could easily prove, with the help of a little Socinian logic, that the Father is dependent on, and derives all his perfections from the Son. "All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John xvi. 15.) I might here confidently appeal to a Socinian whether, supposing the language had been reversed, he would not have thought it decisive of the Son's inferiority. Thus: All that the Son hath are mine, (that is, the Father's,) therefore said I, he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you. Had this been the text, would not our opponents have insisted upon it, that when a son makes a display of property which is his father's, and which he has taken or received from his father, that this property is derived from the father in the way of either gift or loan?

Thus we see that by bringing a creed to the word of God, it requires but little ingenuity to make that word speak the language of human systems. You may collect just as much evidence from scripture that Christ is superior to the Father, as that the Father is superior to Christ. But the fact is, that the passages in question prove nothing, either way. They are not drawing comparisons between Christ and the Father, as to which possesses supreme dignity, but are merely informing us as to the offices which each sustains. God created, preserves, and governs the world by Christ; and Christ saves the church by the Father. But when comparisons are actually instituted between the divinity of the Father and the Son, instead of pointing out differences, we are presented with exact resemblances. "I and my Father are one." "Who," Christ, "thought

it not robbery to be equal with God." "Being the express image of his person." "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Those passages, therefore, which represent the Son as inferior to the Father, cannot be in contradiction to the above, and to many other similar texts, (for one part of scripture cannot contradict another,) but must be referred to the human nature of Christ.

But what proves beyond contradiction the perfect equality of Christ with the Father, is, the circumstance of his exercising the divine perfections. "He made the worlds." "Thou Lord in the beginning hast laid," etc. Now I insist upon it, that if Christ were not truly and essentially divine, he could not have done this. Creation is ascribed to God, and we have no method of proving that there is a God, but by his works. The sacred writers go upon this principle. (Heb. iii. 4; Rom. i. 20.) Suppose a creature, however exalted, to have made all things, and the inference, that they were made by the eternal power and Godhead is false; and on this principle, it is impossible to refute an atheist.

It is equally absurd to suppose that omnipotence was transferred to Christ on that occasion; for (1.) it is infinitely more preposterous to talk about a creature exerting an omnipotent act, than the fable of Hercules carrying the world upon his shoulders. (2.) If omnipotence were delegated to Christ for the work of creation, then the Father during that period was not omnipotent, that is, he was not God. (3.) Did the Father reclaim his omnipotence after the Son had by it made the world? If so, God did undeify and deify himself; and he deified and then undeified a creature. (4.) Or it is supposed that the Father could confer omnipotence upon the Son, without depriving himself of it. But this would, in other words, be to create a God. But if the Father could create one God, he might create as many as the heathen worshipped. What an absurdity! Create a self-existent, independent, omnipotent being!

When, therefore, we have shown that Christ exer-

cised divine perfections, we have demonstrated that he is, in the strict and proper sense of the word, a divine person. The objection taken from the prophets and apostles working miracles is of no weight ; because it was not them, but God that performed the miraculous works : " God bearing them witness, both with signs, and wonders, and with divers miracles." (Heb. ii. 4.) It is certain they did not possess the power of working miracles ; because in some instances the miracles were not wrought at their word. (Matt. xvii. 16 — 21.)

It was this divine person who made, sustains, and governs the worlds ; who is the effulgence of the Father's glory, and the exact image of his substance ; who, by himself, purged our sins. That the apostle intends the purging of sin by his death, is very evident ; because (1.) when he had purged our sins, the apostle adds, " he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Had the words referred to his purifying us from sin by his doctrine, as this work is not yet completed, he would not even yet be sat down on the throne of his glory. (2.) The epistle is addressed to Jews, and the Jews knew that sin was only purged away with blood, as the apostle reminds them : " And almost all things are by the law purged with blood ; and without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) The text, therefore, shows that it was a divine person, himself, who shed his blood for us.

If you ask a Socinian how Christ purged our sins by his death ; he will tell you that Christ, by his death, confirmed the truths which he had taught ; that he taught us the nature, necessity, and privilege of virtue ; and that when we become virtuous, we are forgiven. This sounds pretty much like the Indian's talk about the world's being supported by an elephant, the elephant by a tortoise, etc. To show the absurdity of this mode of interpretation, I need only to remind you, that it is impossible the Jews should understand the apostle in this sense. And as he certainly wrote with an intention of being understood, it is certain he

did not entertain Socinian views of the death of Christ. He taught, that under the law there was no remission of sins without blood; that the gospel recognized that principle; that the Jewish sacrifices were only figures of the sacrifice of Christ; and that he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Heb. ix. 26.) In a word, he insists that what the Jewish sacrifices did figuratively, that the sacrifice of Christ did really. How could it ever enter into the head of the most brutish Jew, that beasts shed their blood in order to confirm the truth of the doctrines which they had taught? And it does not in any wise help the matter to say, that their blood confirmed the doctrines of Moses; for how, in the name of common sense, could the blood of a beast prove his doctrine to be either true or false? But more of this afterwards.

Many who believe in the doctrine of atonement, as well as Socinians, scruple to say that God died; that the Deity shed his blood, etc. And yet if you examine the New Testament, you will be surprised at the number of texts which clearly assert this. "The princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. 2, 8.) According to the Socinians, Jesus Christ was not Lord of glory until after his crucifixion. Their creed, therefore, contradicts the text; for though they admit that Jesus Christ was crucified, yet as he was not Lord of glory until after his crucifixion, according to their creed, they must, therefore, deny that the Lord of glory died. Leaving them, let us inquire of the orthodox, "Who is the King," or Lord, "of glory?" They will surely reply, "Jehovah, strong and mighty, Jehovah, mighty in battle: Jehovah of hosts, he is the King of glory." (Psalm xxiv. 8, 10.) It is said, therefore, that the Lord of glory is one of the divine titles of our Saviour; and when the apostle says they crucified the Lord of glory, it is the same as if he had said, "They crucified Jehovah of hosts." So in Philipians ii. 6—8: "It was he who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, that humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross." So in Revelation i. 17, 18,

Jesus Christ says to the apostle John, "I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead." To understand the import of this title, "I am the first and the last," turn to Isaiah xlv. 6: "Thus saith Jehovah, the king of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts, I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." It follows, therefore, necessarily, that the first and the last is one of those titles which belong exclusively to Deity; and that when we are assured it is the first and the last who died, it amounts to the same as saying, that it is Jehovah, the King and Redeemer of Israel, who died.

These texts are more than sufficient to justify those lines in our hymn book, which have stumbled some ignorant people; such as "Jehovah in thy person show, Jehovah crucified." "Come see, ye worms, your Maker die." "The immortal God hath died for me," etc. People who affect to be shocked at such expressions, have very erroneous ideas of death. Those who entertain the Socinian sentiment, that man is nothing else than a finely organized lump of corruption, will very naturally be alarmed at the language of our hymns. Destroy the animal organization, and the soul is extinct. They transfer this silly notion of death to Christ, and suppose that God could not die without the extinction of Deity. But our Saviour hath taught us that the body may be destroyed without destroying the soul. (Luke xii. 45.) The apostle speaks of death as a being absent from the body, and present with the Lord; and it was this view of death which made him desire to depart from the body, that he might be with Christ. The fact, therefore, is, that no change whatever takes place in the soul, as to its nature or properties, by death; it is merely disengaged from matter. So when it is said that God laid down his life for us, we are not to suppose that any change took place either in the nature or perfections of Deity; but merely that he was disengaged from matter: he remained the same after this, that he was before he was united to it, and during his union with it.

The word which was God, was made (or united) to flesh; and it is just as proper to say, when that union was dissolved, that God died, though the Deity remained the same, as it is to say, that such a man is dead, when the union between his soul and his body is dissolved, though his soul still remains the same in its nature and properties that it was during its union with the body.

Having shown that ours is a divine Saviour, it follows that the human nature of Jesus, supported by the divine to which it was so closely and intimately united, was capable of bearing and surviving that curse of the law which would have involved the world of sinners in everlasting misery.

Some have supposed, that in consequence of the divinity of Christ, considerable abatements were made to him: the dignity of the person, according to this opinion, made a lesser share of suffering of more importance than the everlasting punishment of such degraded creatures as us sinners. This is the doctrine of commutation; and though it equally with my sentiment secures the glory of our salvation to Christ, yet I think it is contrary to scripture. "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." "He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Such language is surely inconsistent with all ideas of commutation, abatement, etc.

From the proofs and explanations which have been given, it appears that though Christ suffered the full penalty of the law, he did not endure the same quantum of pain which mankind would have endured, had the penalty been executed on them. In this respect there was an infinite saving in executing the sentence of the law upon the substitute instead of the principals. And this view of the subject removes another objection. It has been said, "If the full penalty of the law was executed upon the substitute, there was no saving, as to

the amount of suffering ; and when that is the case, it is surely better that the sinner should suffer rather than an innocent person. As, suppose ten persons liable to be punished with a hundred stripes each ; would it not be better for them to receive the punishment, than for an innocent person to receive a thousand lashes in their stead ?" I answer, ordinarily it would. But suppose the ten persons to be in a sickly state, and the punishment likely to cause their death ; and suppose the substitute could bear the thousand lashes better than any one of the other could bear his hundred ; and suppose that nine out of the ten were restored to be useful members of society ; here the dignity of the law would be maintained, much suffering would be prevented, and much good produced.

If Christ were a divine person, it is argued that his justice must have required a satisfaction, as well as that of the Father ; and we are desired to explain how it is that Christ should waive the claims of his justice, and suffer in the sinner's stead, when the Father stood upon full satisfaction ; how the justice of the Son was so yielding, and that of the Father so inflexible ? This quibble, (for it deserves no better name,) is owing to the absurdity of supposing that if Christ partake of the divine nature equally with the Father, that they have each a separate interest in the divine government ; and that if any atonement be necessary for transgression, each must separately require it. It is sufficient to answer, that they do not reign separately, but jointly, by one code of laws ; and that the satisfaction required is the execution of the laws. In Sparta two kings reigned jointly. When the laws were violated, each sovereign did not punish the offence separately, as they had but one code of laws ; the execution of those laws was all the satisfaction which the sovereigns required to support the authority of the government.

That Christ is associated with the Father in the divine government is a very clear case ; for —

(I.) He is seated on the divine throne. (Heb. i. 3 ; Rev. v., vii.)

(2.) In obeying the divine law, we yield obedience to Christ, as well as to the Father, "being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ."

(3.) Christians are the servants of Christ. "Ye serve the Lord Christ." That the service which they perform to Christ is exactly the same with that they perform to the Father, is clear from the example of the apostle James, who associates them together without any note of difference, as to the service which is rendered to each. "James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ," etc. (James i. 1.) Christians will be rewarded with the kingdom of heaven by Christ. "Where I am, there shall also my servants be." "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Here it may be objected, that in Matthew xx. 23, we are told it is not Christ's right or prerogative to give this reward; that the words "it shall be given to them," being in italics, have been supplied by the translators, and are not in the original. But the sense of the passage evidently is, as rendered by Campbell, "But to sit at my right hand and at my left, I cannot give, unless to those for whom it is prepared by my Father." It is clear then that he can give this privilege to those for whom it is prepared; and it is remarkable that Christ is concerned in this work of preparation, as well as the Father. "I go to prepare a place for you." (John xiv. 2.) The same homage is paid to Christ, and the same perfections are ascribed to him as to the Father by the inhabitants of heaven, who surely are not guilty of idolatry! (Rev. v. 13; vii. 10.) With such examples as these to countenance their conduct, the saints on earth feel no alarm in honouring the Son, even as they honour the Father. But how can Socinianism be reconciled with these things? If Christ be a mere man, he can no more possess divine prerogatives, than a nut shell can contain the whole element of water. If we are called his servants on account of obeying his precepts, we might with the same propriety be called the servants of the apostles for obeying the precepts delivered by them. But we

are nowhere called their servants, nor do they presume to call us such. If this distinction be restricted to Jesus because he was the founder of the christian dispensation, then the Jews ought to have been called the servants of Moses, because he was the founder of their dispensation. But where does Moses call them his servants? And where does he promise, "I will give them eternal life?"

Having shown that Christ and the Father are both on the same throne; that they govern by the same code of laws; that those who obey these laws are the servants of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the reward of heaven is given in the name of both; I hope it is sufficiently evident that the justice of the Son is not distinct from the justice of the Father.

I am really ashamed of replying to so many quirks, and fear lest I should weary my readers: but if they will but advert to the stress which is commonly laid on them, the effrontery with which they are pressed on the minds of weak christians, who are sometimes puzzled with them; and, above all, if they will but consider that these trashy conceptions are looked upon as unanswerable arguments, because writers on the atonement will not stoop to refute them; they will think with me, that this part of my labour is both necessary and profitable. I will, however, release their patience, by bringing these observations to a close, after I have noticed but one more objection.

It is said, "If Christ be divine as well as the Father, then the satisfaction, if made at all, was made to himself jointly with the Father; but might he not as well have dispensed with the penalty of the law, as to execute it upon himself?" The laws of God, it has already been remarked, are good; and good laws ought to be executed, to support the authority of good government. All the force of the objection arises from inattention to the twofold nature of Christ. I have proved his true and proper divinity; and our opponents do not deny his real humanity; now it was not his divine, but human nature that suffered; and yet his human nature, of

itself, was not able to survive the penalty of the law ; and, therefore, it was taken into union with the divine, that by virtue of the divine aid, a full satisfaction might be made in the human nature, for the sins of the whole world. It is improper, therefore, to say that one divine person made satisfaction to himself, and to his copartner in the divine government, as the divinity merely enabled a human being to make the satisfaction. This sentiment may be illustrated by the doctrine of obedience. We are depraved, as well as guilty. On account of this depravity of nature, we have a dislike to our duty. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," etc. This indisposition can only be removed by a divine influence. "It is God that worketh in you, to will and to do." etc. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," etc. "Strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man." Now draw the comparison. Man, left to himself, could not atone for sin ; and man, left to himself, could never practice duty. Man, strengthened by the Deity, could atone ; and man, strengthened by the Deity, can obey. Now if it be proper to say, that an atonement made to God, by virtue of an exertion of his divine power, might as well have been dispensed with, because it looks like making an atonement to himself ; it will be equally proper to say, that the obedience rendered to God, by virtue of an exertion of his divine power, might as well be dispensed with, because it looks like rendering obedience to himself. If God were to dispense with the penalty of the law in cases of disobedience, that would be in part to dispense with the obedience of his creatures. If divine justice does not require the execution of its laws, it cannot require obedience to them ; for a liberty to transgress them with impunity, is inconsistent with the obligation to observe them. Now as we are naturally incapable both of satisfying justice for our sins, and of yielding the obedience which reason requires, if it be proper for God to assist us to obey, it must be equally proper that he should assist us to atone.

I know that Socinians deny all divine influence on

the minds of christians ; but they grant enough for my argument. They grant that God has furnished us with the means of becoming virtuous by the gospel of Christ ; and we say he has furnished the means of atonement in the person of Christ. Now if his supplying the means of atonement be the same as atoning himself ; then his supplying the means of obedience is the same as obeying himself ; and if this be a sufficient reason why he should not require atonement, it must be a reason equally valid, why he should not require obedience. The principle equally applies to both cases ; but as the objects are different, so are the means ; a human being created in purity, united to the Deity, and sustained by him, was necessary to make atonement ; and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is equally necessary to make us obedient. Only then distinguish between the divine and human nature of Christ, and you see at once through all the sophistry of Socinianism.

SECTION II.

THE DOCTRINE OF SUBSTITUTION MAINTAINED AS CONSISTENT WITH DIVINE JUSTICE.

HAVING, in an essay on the moral government of God, shown that the laws of God must be executed, it follows, that there is no way of escape for transgressors, but by the appointment of a substitute to suffer in their stead. Against this appointment many objections have been urged, which are entitled to consideration, and which have been replied to in part, in the preceding section : here it is further objected—

(1.) That it is unjust to punish the innocent for the crimes of the guilty : no judge can admit of a substitute suffering the penalty in the place of a transgressor. If the law cannot be dispensed with, justice requires that its sentence should be executed on the offender, and not on the guiltless.

The force of this objection springs from our connecting impunity with guilt, and punishment with

innocence. Were the guilty to escape, considered as such, it would manifestly be unjust; but we maintain that none such can escape, as none will derive any saving advantage from the death of Christ, who are not made virtuous. This, as well as the other part of the objection, which consists in connecting punishment with innocence, presses as hard against Socinianism as against orthodoxy. Our opponents do not deny that Jesus Christ was innocent, and that he died a very painful and disgraceful death; but they hesitate to pronounce his pain punishment, and prefer to call it suffering; and for this we would not contend with them, as we have no wish to dispute about words. We more commonly say that Christ suffered for us, than that he was punished for us. If a person endures a certain quantum of pain, it is a matter of very little importance by what name it is called; the pain is the same, whether it be denominated suffering or punishment. We object to punishment, on account of the suffering connected with it. If we could form an idea of punishment from which no inconvenience were suffered, our minds would not revolt at it.

But I shall probably be told that there is much difference between suffering for a person's benefit, and suffering in his stead. Our opponents admit that Christ suffered for our benefit, or, on our account, because by his death he confirmed the gospel, which is intended to deliver us from the guilt and power of sin, and raise us to immortal life and blessedness. According to this scheme, the innocent suffer, and the guilty escape. If we look no further, the objection applies equally against both systems, since suffering should be awarded to the guilty, not to the innocent. The Socinians, however, will reply to the objection, that the object of the sufferings of Christ must be taken into the account. Justice does not forbid benevolence. When one person can materially benefit a multitude, by suffering something on their account, justice sanctions and mercy applauds the deed. It is only necessary to remark in reply, that the object of

our Saviour's suffering was to bring men to holiness and heaven; and if this object be not a justification of his dying in our stead, neither is it a justification of his dying on our account.

In some instances, to suffer for a man's benefit, and to suffer in his stead, amounts to the same thing. Suppose A. and B. to be insolvent, each to the amount of £100. C. takes pity on A., becomes responsible for the sum, and afterwards pays it. D. has compassion on B. and gives him £100., with which he satisfies his creditors himself. Here C. suffers the loss of £100. in A.'s stead. D. does not become responsible, but suffers the loss of £100. for B.'s benefit. Who will undertake to show that though D. has performed an act of mercy, yet C. has committed an act of injustice?

In some circumstances you cannot do a man a kindness without becoming responsible for him; and it seems rather odd, that a creed which makes benevolence almost everything in religion, should arrest the hand of charity in all such cases.

It is often asserted that no sovereign ought to punish the innocent for the crimes of the guilty. We grant the truth of this assertion, in reference to the ordinary administration of justice; but we deny that it holds universally. When a tyrant invades the dominions of a peaceable sovereign who has done him no injury, is it not lawful to repel and destroy the invader? Yet many of the instruments of the tyrant who fall in his service, may be innocent men, who were forced into his service against their will. This is surely an instance of a sovereign justly punishing the innocent for the crimes of the guilty.

Another instance is that of hostages. When a rebel city has been subdued by its lawful sovereign, instead of depriving all the inhabitants of their most valuable privileges, to prevent a second defection, humane policy has often been content to receive a few as security for the good behaviour of the rest. In such a case, instead of objecting to the legality of a few in-

dividuals offering themselves as security for the good behaviour of the rest, such volunteers in the cause of patriotism have been panegyricized in the page of history ; and the sovereign who has pardoned past rebellion, and restored the rebels to the full enjoyment of their forfeited mercies, upon the receipt of certain hostages, has justly been applauded for his humanity. Now a contract which is honourable to both parties, may be executed in all its terms without injustice. If, therefore, the city should again revolt, the hostages, though perfectly innocent in the affair, may be justly punished for the crime of their fellow citizens.

When it is affirmed as an universal proposition, that the innocent ought not to be punished for the crimes of the guilty, the sentiment must be considered as originating in narrow views of government. That state is best constituted, which secures to its subjects the largest share of happiness. Upon this principle it is more glorious to prevent crime, than to punish it when committed. The usual preventives are first, the threatening of punishment ; and, secondly, the example held out to society by the due execution of the laws upon offenders. But there is a third and still more efficacious method of preventing crime ; and that is, by engaging the community at large to employ their influence in the support of social order. This principle was carried to a high degree of perfection by Alfred, the Great. "When he succeeded to the monarchy of England," says Blackstone, (see Comment. book iv., chap. 33, sect. 1,) "his mighty genius prompted him to undertake a most great and necessary work, which he is said to have executed in as masterly a manner : no less than to new model the constitution ; to rebuild it on a plan that should endure for ages ; and, out of its old discordant materials, which were heaped upon each other in a vast and rude irregularity, to form one uniform and well connected whole. This he effected, by reducing the whole kingdom under one regular and gradual subordination of government, wherein each man was answerable to his immediate superior for his own con-

duct and that of his nearest neighbours : for to him we owe that masterpiece of judicial polity, the subdivision of England into tythings and hundreds, if not into counties." By making the members of a tything responsible for one another, they kept a strict watch upon each other's conduct, and made it a point of honour to observe the strictest obedience to the laws. The effect of this institution was astonishing. "It doth not seem to be possible," remarks Dr. Henry, (see *Hist. of Brit.*, vol iii., p. 337, edit. 4,) "for human prudence to contrive any political arrangement more admirably adapted than this was, for promoting the peace and good order of society. We need not, therefore, be surprised to hear of the prodigious effects it is said to have produced, when it was fully established and strictly executed in the reign of Alfred the Great." "By these means," says Ingulphus, "so profound a tranquillity, and such perfect security, were established over all the land, that if a traveller left, or lost, ever so great a sum of money in the open fields, or highways, he was sure of finding it next morning, or even a month after, entire and untouched."

When a person had committed some great crime and absconded, the other members of the tithing to which he belonged, were not always amerced to the full amount of the penalty incurred ; but it was both a difficult and disagreeable task to exonerate themselves ; and the stigma on their character, for having harboured a criminal among them, was not soon, nor easily worn off. Though the system does not now exist in this country, in all its primitive vigour, yet it is kept alive and operates beneficially. A parish is sometimes fined for the fault of its officer ; and a county, in some instances, is obliged to make compensation for injuries which individuals suffer in it. In all such cases, many innocent persons are punished for the faults of others. If it be said, that parishes and counties are fined only when the law presumes they might have prevented the evils on account of which the fines are exacted ; and, therefore, that they are punished, not so much for the

faults of others, as for a neglect of their own duties ; I answer, that no legislators could be so ignorant as to suppose, that all who pay a proportion of the fines, possessed some power of control over the delinquents ; or that, of those who by their joint influence might have averted the evils, no one did his duty ; it must, therefore, have been judged to be better upon the whole, that some innocent persons should occasionally be punished for the faults of others, than that so important a principle to the preservation of good order, as that of mutual responsibility, should be abandoned.

Character is justly considered as more valuable than property ; and yet in many instances innocent people, and those who are universally believed to be innocent, suffer in their reputation from the crimes of others. In a village, a district, or a country, where any particular vice is popular, the inhabitants who live within the sphere of its publicity, share in the odium which it occasions, though many individuals may be pure and unspotted. There is a general estimate formed of the character of bodies of men, which is applied to each individual composing them ; and this extends not only to places, but to relations, connexions, professions, etc. Thus a family is disgraced, when a member of it is hung for murder. If the public character of any society or corporation be low, the few virtuous members in it suffer in their reputation. The same remark applies to divines, lawyers, physicians, etc. Nor is this improper. For though certain persons may suffer beyond their strict deserts, yet the sentiment is productive of such beneficial effects, that no good man will complain of it. It is owing to the prevalence of this sentiment, that all the valuable members of a community take so much pains to keep the body pure. They would feel themselves disgraced by being connected with profligates. Should it be contended, that a man whose character rises above the general level of those with whom he is associated, will be estimated at his real worth ; it is granted that this may possibly be true with respect to those who are intimately ac-

quainted with him ; but his name, profession, and connexions may be known to thousands who know nothing of his private character. When, therefore, the public opinion of a set of men is formed upon a fair average of their character, the individuals who suffer by it, must lay the blame upon their own associates, and not upon the public. The worst characters among this set of men, gain just as much by being raised to the average level, as the best lose by falling to it. Here, then, the innocent suffer in the stead of the guilty, and the guilty escape. Nor can the justice of this be disputed, without affirming that it is unjust in the public to form even a correct general judgment of the character of any body of men ; but no one, it is presumed, will be so bold.

The principal objection against the above, lies in the circumstance, that the persons who suffer for the faults of others, have no liberty of choice in the affair ; but in applying these instances to the christian doctrine of substitution, we must not forget that Jesus freely offered himself.

Our laws admit of voluntary responsibility in certain cases. When a person is taken up on suspicion of some minor offence, instead of being confined in prison until the time of trial, he may enjoy his liberty, on procuring bail for his appearance ; and should he not appear in court at the appointed time, his sureties justly suffer for his fault. When one person has threatened to injure another, he may be bound by sureties to keep the peace, and if he execute his threat, they suffer in consequence. I never heard of any objection to the justice of admitting these voluntary substitutes ; and such cases furnish decisive proof that the innocent may be justly punished for the crimes of the guilty.

But vicarious suffering, it is said, is never admitted by human laws in cases where life is forfeited. This is freely granted ; but it furnishes no argument against the vicarious nature of the death of Christ ; the two cases are quite dissimilar in the following particulars : —

1. Should a man offer his life in the stead of a criminal, he would offer what he has no right to give. If his life were as much at his own disposal as his money, he might with as much justice become responsible for another in his person, as in his property. But our blessed Lord had "life in himself," and had "power to lay down his life."

2. In the case supposed, only one life is saved, and nothing is saved in the quantum of suffering; it is better, therefore, that the guilty should suffer, than the innocent. In the christian scheme, the death of Christ saves myriads from destruction, and thus diminishes in an incalculable degree the quantum of suffering.

3. An earthly judge ought not to take the life of an innocent person, because he cannot restore it again. But God who accepted the life of Christ as our ransom, raised him from the dead.

4. Were an earthly judge to take the innocent in the stead of the guilty, he could make the sufferer no recompence. But because Jesus "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name," etc. Animated with the prospect of his great reward, "the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

5. An earthly judge cannot foresee whether a criminal, if spared, would become an useful member of society: but God foresaw that millions would become virtuous in consequence of the death of Christ.

If the justice of the substitution of Christ in the stead of sinners be granted, it is contended that all those for whom he died must infallibly be saved, since it would be manifestly unjust to punish both the substitute and the principal for the same offence. When an insolvent has satisfied the claims of his creditors through the medium of a surety, it would be the height of injustice to throw him into prison at a future period

for the debts which his surety had cancelled long ago.

There would be considerable weight in this objection, if the Saviour were procured by the sinner; but that is not the case. The Sovereign of heaven provided the sacrifice, and the victim was under no restraint, but offered himself freely. The Father and Son were perfectly agreed that the object of vicarious suffering was not to set aside moral obligation, but to strengthen it, and to furnish sinners with the means of becoming virtuous and happy, in a way consistent with the demands of law and the dignity of the divine government. As God provided the atonement, he has an undoubted right to propose it to his needy creatures upon any conditions he may think proper. He was under no obligation to provide a Saviour at all; and, therefore, cannot be obliged to grant an unconditional pardon. To propose the benefits of the atonement upon any terms short of the desert of sin, is unmerited mercy; but to propose it upon the terms of repentance and faith, is infinite mercy. If, therefore, sinners reject it, they justly suffer for their sins. As there is no injustice done to the offenders, so neither is there to the substitute; for he suffered voluntarily, and agreed that the benefits of his death should be suspended upon the conditions specified. And if God do no injustice to either of the parties, there cannot possibly be any injustice in the transaction.

What gives such objections the appearance of argument is, their reference to human affairs. If my surety has satisfied the demands of my creditor in my stead, I am no longer liable to be imprisoned for the debt. In cases of this kind, the surety is generally procured at the earnest entreaty of the debtor; the surety is supposed to feel no concern for the interests of the creditor, but to be influenced merely by a principle of compassion for the debtor; and the creditor is not recognized as a moral governor, who has a right of interference with the subsequent conduct of the

debtor, but the contrary. Thus the objection is taken from a case which differs in every particular from the one to which it is applied.

In human affairs, when a man's debt is freely forgiven, it would be as unjust to cast him into prison for it afterwards, as to make him answerable for the debt after it had been discharged by his surety. But this is not the case under the government of God. Read Matthew xviii. 23—35: God's dealings with men are there likened unto those of a certain king, who would take account of his servants. One was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents, and "he had not to pay." The man humbled himself, and his lord was moved with compassion, and forgave him the debt. He had no sooner received this act of kindness, than he abused a fellow servant. His lord expostulated the matter with him, "was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him." Our lord's application of this case to his apostles, who were unquestionably in a state of acceptance, is this: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

The objector will not deny, that when a man embraces the gospel and becomes virtuous, his past sins are forgiven; and that should he subsequently relapse and die in sin, he will have to answer at the day of judgment for his former sins, which had been pardoned. Now the justice of this procedure can never be made apparent, while God is viewed merely as a creditor, and man as a debtor. Interpret the figures in consistency with moral government, and all difficulties instantly vanish.

To affirm that God cannot punish the innocent for the crimes of the guilty, is to contradict plain matter of fact. In the rebellion of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, "their wives, and their sons, and their little children," and everything they had, as well as themselves, were destroyed by the sentence of God; though there is no evidence that their wives and sons were in

the conspiracy; and certainly their little children were not.

In Deuteronomy, chapter 13, it is decreed by the Almighty, that in case a city should revolt from his worship into idolatry, all the inhabitants, and even the cattle, should be destroyed with the edge of the sword, and the city, and everything in it be consumed with fire. In an instance of this kind, many little innocents would be punished for the crimes of the parents.

When Achan had sinned, "Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan and his sons, and his daughters, etc., and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones." The sons and daughters, though innocent of the theft, were involved in the punishment of their guilty parent.

David sinned in numbering Israel; and seventy thousand of the people, who had no share in the sin, were punished with death for it; and the sinner, on repenting, was pardoned. When David repented of his criminal connexion with Bathsheba, "Nathan said unto him, the Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born unto thee shall surely die. And the Lord struck the child," etc. Here is a plain instance of the innocent being substituted in the place of the guilty: "Thou shalt not die; howbeit the child shall surely die."

It is admitted that the above instances bear but a very imperfect resemblance to the popular doctrine of atonement; but the difference is all on the side of the atonement. In the three first, the sinners were slain as well as the innocent; but in the christian scheme both parties are not necessarily punished; sinners may be pardoned. These examples, however, are quite to the point in proof that in the government of God the innocent are sometimes punished for the crimes of the guilty. In the two last, the offender was pardoned; and one of them, at least, is a most decisive

instance of substitution. In all these instances the innocent sufferers had no option; but our Lord suffered voluntarily.

I am aware that infidels urge such cases as proofs against the authority of the Bible. A just God, they say, cannot punish the innocent for the crimes of the guilty.

A short answer to this objection will be quite sufficient. Cases of this sort are not peculiar to revelation. The fact, that both infants and adults lose their lives through the wickedness of others, is of daily occurrence; and is just as great a difficulty in natural religion as in revealed. The Bible, however, does what the volume of nature cannot do; it explains the difficulty. It teaches that all suffering is penal evil, inflicted as the punishment of moral evil: "Death is the wages of sin." If a deist deny this, let him try upon some other principle to reconcile with the justice of Deity, the existence of misery in his moral government.

It will, perhaps, be objected, that we ought not to say, in such cases as the above, that the innocent were punished for the crimes of the guilty; but that the guilty were punished for their crimes in the sufferings of the innocent. Thus, David was punished in the death of his men and his child; and Corah was punished in the destruction of his family and all that he had. Suppose, now, we were to concede this point; it would then be improper to say that Christ was punished for our sins, but quite correct to affirm that sinners were punished for their sins in the sufferings of Christ. Now this is about all that we contend for. There is no occasion, however, to give up the word punishment as applicable to the sufferer. If that pain which is inflicted as the result of a judicial sentence be not punishment, it is difficult to say what is. Whether it be just or not, a judicial infliction is punishment, and it must create great confusion in language to deny it. When God pronounces the sentence of his law against sin, he pronounces the punishment of that sin; and he

upon whom the sentence is executed, receives the punishment of that sin; and as God can do no injustice, that person is justly punished. The penalty of David's transgression, in numbering Israel, was three days' pestilence; and the seventy thousand who suffered in consequence, received the punishment annexed to his offence.

The 21st chapter of the 2nd of Samuel contains an account of a three years' famine in Israel. David inquired of the Lord respecting the cause of it, and was answered, that it was occasioned by the sin of Saul, in seeking to destroy the Gibeonites. David applied to them to know what satisfaction they required; and they answered with a request that seven of Saul's sons should be hanged. This was complied with; and as a proof that God approved of these executions, we read, "After that God was entreated for the land." Saul had been dead some years, and, therefore, could not be personally punished in this ignominious death of his children.

All inflictions of this sort are exemplary, and intended to act as a restraint on the wicked. Men, in general, are desirous of transmitting their names to posterity, and of enjoying a sort of immortality on earth in their children, and in their children's children, to the end of time. This sentiment prevailed particularly among the Jews; it was considered as the greatest calamity that could befall a man, for his family to become extinct; and the greatest blessing which God could give, to perpetuate and increase it. Thus Abraham's faith and virtue were rewarded with a son, and a promise that his seed should be multiplied as the stars, and exist to the latest generations. Hence the many threatenings against wicked men of the extinction of their families. Nothing could operate so powerfully upon that people, as a threat of this kind; and, therefore, it was put into the law, and, in the instances of Saul, Jeroboam, and many others, carried into execution, "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation."

Princes full of pride and ambition, cannot well be punished more severely in this world, than in the ruin of their dominions. To restrain their wickedness, they are sometimes threatened with this dreadful evil; and when they have proved incorrigible, the punishment has been inflicted as a warning to posterity. Manasseh is a remarkable instance: "Because Manasseh, king of Judah, hath done these abominations, therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold I am bringing such an evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle." (2 Kings xxi. 11, 12.) The king in his captivity repented, was forgiven and restored; but the sentence against the nation was only respited. And it is a remarkable circumstance, that though his grandson, Josiah, purged the nation of idolatry, restored the purity of divine worship, "and like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses, neither after him arose there any like him;" and though the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers, and all his days departed not from following the Lord God of their fathers; yet, "notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there." (2 Kings xxiii. 25—27.)

It is true, the Almighty deferred the execution of the threat until the next generation, on account of the piety of Josiah and his subjects; and it is equally true, that at the time of its execution, the prince was deeply depraved; yet still, the sins of Manasseh are mentioned as the moving cause. "Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to re-

move them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; and also for the innocent blood that he shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon." (2 Kings xxiv. 3, 4. *)

In this instance, the culprit was pardoned and restored; and he had been dead many years, when his sins were visited on the fourth generation, which certainly was not chargeable with his guilt. We may philosophize upon sin, until it seems to be a mere trifle. We are sinners, and thence feel interested in lessening the demerit of sin. God has instructed us in its enormity, not by philosophy, but by the punishment which he hath threatened in his word, and executed in his righteous displeasure.

The principles of mutual responsibility, exemplary punishment, and the final adjustment of every individual case at the general judgment, will furnish a full justification of the ways of God to men, though his providential dispensations contain numerous examples of some being punished for the sins of others. The instances which have been given, not only overturn the position, that it is unjust to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, but also another, which is a great one with our opponents, and indeed necessary to the support of their system, that all punishment should be corrective to the sufferer; for how could the infants in the families of Corah, Dathan, Abiram, and Achan, be made virtuous by being destroyed with their parents, and for their parents' sins? God may as justly punish the sins of the world in the person of Christ, as the sins of David in an infant, or the sins of Manasseh in the descendents of his subjects, of the fourth generation. There are greater difficulties in most of the above cases, than in the doctrine of atonement. 1. The innocents suffered involuntarily; whereas our Lord suffered of choice. 2. Several innocents died, in most of the above examples, for the crimes of one culprit; but one innocent person redeemed a world of sinners.

* See Stillingfleet on the Sufferings of Christ, p. 151.

SECTION III.

THE FOUNDATION AND COMMENCEMENT OF
SACRIFICE.

It will be gathered from the preceding observations and reasonings on this great subject, that the atonement of Christ was not necessary to work a change in the disposition of Deity, favourable to his creatures. For had he been disposed to take vengeance on them, what was there to hinder him from doing so? If he had not been graciously disposed towards us, would he have provided a Saviour for us? "God so loved," not hated, "the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," etc. He loved sinners as much before Christ died, as he has ever done since: the death of Christ was not the cause of the love of God to us, but the effect of it. Our opponents may demand, "Why could not God pardon sinners on the ground of his mercy, without the intervention of a third person?" We ask in our turn, as to the matter of fact, Did God publish pardon to sinners, without the intervention of a third person? They cannot answer no, since they believe in the divine mission of our Saviour. We ask them again, why was the interposition of this third person necessary? They reply, to bring men to obedience to the laws of God, not to make satisfaction for their disobedience. But why cannot God annul the precepts of his law as well as the penalty? It seems a strange way of enforcing the obligation of law, by annulling its penal sanctions! A God of love, would, of course, give his creatures a good law; and I never yet heard the goodness of a sovereign called in question, merely for executing a good law. I hope you perceive, by this time, that a God of love may see it necessary to support the authority of law by its due execution; and that the death of Christ, as our substitute, was a medium through which God manifested his mercy to us in a way consistent with the dignity of his govern-

ment. In truth, our views of the death of Christ argue a much greater degree of the love of God to sinners, than the system of our opponents. The love of God to sinners, in giving his Son to die for them, cannot be perceived on any other ground than that Christ is his well beloved Son; for if God had hated his Son, we might have concluded that he gave him up to death, because he hated him, and not because he loved us. Now if we infer the love of God to us, because he gave his beloved Son to die for us; then the degree of love which God bore to us, can only be calculated by the degree of suffering which Christ endured; and as our system supposes Christ to have suffered almost infinitely more than does that of our opponents, we can see almost infinitely more of the love of God to man, than our opponents can in the death of Christ. Socinians are obliged to misrepresent our doctrine, before they can manufacture an argument to bear against it. Thus they charge us with holding that the death of Christ was the cause of the love of God to us; and then they break out into blasphemous and outrageous language about God's glutting his vindictive fury with the blood of his innocent Son, before he could be inclined to show any mercy to sinners, etc.

The view which has been given on the subject, will furnish a sufficient answer to what our opponents say on the transfer of sin, guilt, innocence, and righteousness. It is not necessary to the consistency of our doctrine, that God viewed Christ as guilty of our sins; or that Christ felt guilt on account of them. Without this he might suffer as our substitute the punishment due to our sins. Nor is it necessary that God should view us as innocent and righteous, on account of what Christ suffered for us; for he can be just, though we are sinners, and he can be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Job xxii. 2, 3; Job xxxv. 6—8; and Psalm xvi. 2, 3, are quoted to prove that, as God is neither benefited by our virtue, nor injured by our vice, he can require no atonement for sin. Is it then, I would ask, in-

ferred from these texts, that God is not a moral governor; that he will neither reward virtue nor punish vice? I have always supposed that a good sovereign ruled with an eye to the good of his subjects, rather than to the promotion of his own private ends. What would be thought of that ruler who would reward no virtue, from which he did not derive some personal advantage; nor punish any crime, from which he did not receive some personal injury? Have the Socinians transformed their God of love into such a selfish being as this? If Almighty God be so perfectly free of all influence from human conduct, as to be indifferent respecting the moral quality of our actions, the forgiveness of sin, and the repentance and reformation of the sinner, are as fully excluded from this system, as the doctrine of atonement; and the God of the Socinians is identified with the sleepy drone of the Epicureans.

The argument drawn from the unchangeableness of God, is something akin to the preceding. It is supposed that if God has not always the same feeling towards us, let our conduct be what it will, he must be a changeable being. Should we grant this, it only proves, as applied to the doctrine of atonement, that the death of Christ in our stead did not excite the love of God to us; but still it might be the manifestation of his love. Socinians seem to set the unchangeableness of God against his moral principles, as though they could not agree together. But does he not immutably hate vice, and love virtue? If so, it is impossible for him to regard the good and the bad with the same feelings. And it is scarcely possible to libel his character in a more shocking manner, than to assert the contrary. But if God immutably hates vice, is it not proper he should publicly express that hatred by the punishment of it? Our opponents say, that though he hates sin, he loves the sinner. We grant it, and insist that ours is the only system in which God has displayed his hatred of sin by punishing it, and his love to the sinner by saving him. In the

Socinian system there is love to the sinner, but where shall we look for hatred to sin? It represents the love of God as like the weakness of a dotard, who either cannot see a fault, or is too fond to express his disapproval of it. The love of God to sinners is the compassion of a righteous sovereign, who cannot relax the authority of government in favour of transgressors, as this would be a public injury to the community. None but a weak prince would ever think of promoting the obedience of his subjects to those laws which he himself would not execute. In a word, sanctions are essential to laws; set aside the sanctions of law, and in effect you repeal it: and who can feel the obligation of a law, after it is repealed?

Most of the Socinian objections against the great doctrine we are defending, are owing to either misrepresentation or quibble. The following is a remarkable instance of the latter: if, say they, Christ died in the stead of sinners, how happens it that they die also? Now if a Socinian will have the goodness to answer the following question, I will answer his. If God freely and fully forgives sinners, without an atonement, how comes it to pass that they die also?

But it is said, we are required to forgive others as God has forgiven us: now what would be thought of a man, who should refuse to release an insolvent debtor from prison, till a third became responsible for the sum; and who should plead as his justification, that even God would not forgive without first requiring satisfaction? I answer —

1. The relations between the parties differ in the two cases. A creditor may forgive a debt, not only without a satisfaction, but without exacting any conditions. God, as a moral governor, cannot, according to our opponents, pardon a sinner without requiring repentance and obedience.

2. A man may very innocently be insolvent in his circumstances; but no man can sin against God without being guilty: it does not follow, therefore, that because a creditor ought to release an innocent

debtor, it would be proper for God to pardon a sinner upon the same terms.

3. After a creditor has forgiven a debtor a first debt, he cannot cast him into prison for it, should the debtor subsequently refuse to pay a second debt. But if a sinner should relapse after God has forgiven him, he is liable to be punished for those offences which had been pardoned. (See Matt. xviii. 23—35.)

4. A creditor is merely the guardian of his own interests, and may therefore give up his rights if he pleases. But if you suppose the creditor to be acting in trust for the benefit of others, he has no right to sacrifice their interests in favour of a debtor; to do this would be to betray his trust. A sovereign has to guard the interests of the community; a good and wise sovereign will frame his laws so as to secure these interests; he cannot therefore set aside these laws in favour of transgressors, without doing injury to the public. You can apply this remark to the government of God.

In the case of sins against men, the precept is, forgive them, on the condition of their saying, "I repent." The Socinians infer from this, that God will forgive on the same conditions. To this we reply—

1. The precept cannot apply to all men. To magistrates for instance. For were they to pardon every criminal who should say, "I repent," the condition of pardon would amount to a virtual repeal of the laws, and would afford all the encouragement to crime which the most depraved mind could desire. Now if human sovereigns could not pardon upon this condition merely, then we have no right to infer that God will.

2. The precept cannot apply to all crimes. Suppose a man break into my house during my absence, steal all my property and murder my family; I search for the villain, secure him, and am about to bring him to justice, when he exclaims, "I repent;" am I bound in duty to God to set him at liberty? He might destroy another family the next night; in such a case

I could not be clear; because, had I brought him to justice for the first offence, he could not have committed the second. Society has claims upon me. It is my duty to prevent, as far as possible, any injury to the public; and when lenity to an individual would be a public injury, the voice of mercy forbids it, and cries aloud for justice.

The precept to forgive injuries then can only apply to cases where the injury is confined to the individual, and where the mercy to the sinner would not be likely to have any injurious effect upon society. Of course this precept forbids all revenge; for had God been of a revengeful disposition, he would not have forgiven them. They ought to forgive one another all those little, petty, private injuries, which are perpetually taking place, even among christians; and more generally through accident, infirmity, or ignorance, than design: without this forgiving disposition, the best christians would be perpetually quarreling: and it is a good reason why christians should forgive one another, that God for Christ's sake, (not for their repentance' sake,) hath forgiven them. All these little things should be forgiven without repentance; for he who to-day receives some hurt from a weak brother, perhaps undesignedly, does as much harm himself to-morrow. Now were each individual to stand on having the injury proved, and an apology made, how, in the name of common sense, could christian peace subsist for a moment among them? When the injury is greater, and evidently springs from a bad disposition, our merciful religion requires an apology; the offender must say, "I repent." And when the crime is of sufficient magnitude to affect the interests of society, the offender ought not to be forgiven: he must be delivered up to justice.

If we are to suppose then that God will treat us exactly as he requires us to treat one another, he will pardon some faults unconditionally, others on a profession of repentance, and others he will not pardon at all, though we repent in sackcloth and ashes. Nothing can be more preposterous than to argue that

God will pardon all sins without an atonement, because he requires us to do so in some instances. We are required to forgive on a mere profession of repentance: "If he say, I repent, forgive him:" now if God forgave on the same conditions that we are required to do, he would forgive us on merely saying, "I repent." The Socinians do not carry the love of God quite so far as this; they allow that he requires true repentance; whereas we are to be satisfied with a profession, which, in many instances, is insincere. He therefore requires more than he has authorized us to do.

When Socinians affirm that God requires nothing more than repentance and reformation, in order to forgiveness, their courage is more to be admired than their prudence. The very first promise of pardon which we meet with in scripture, is made on the condition of presenting to God a sin offering. (See Gen. iv. 7.) The word *chatath*, rendered sin, is often in scripture rendered, sin offering: and that this is its meaning in this passage, is evident from hence:—

1. To talk of sin lying or couching at the door is, as Parkhurst observes, scarcely to be reconciled with modesty, and could never have become a proverbial expression among us, but for a misconstruction of the passage.

2. If we understand the word as denoting sin simply, the following words, "lieth at the door," personify sin, without representing it as an enemy. It is not in the house, but on the outside, at the door; hence the sinner is represented as leaving his sins behind him, when he enters his dwelling; whereas, in fact, sin torments a man most when he is in his house, and has an opportunity of indulging reflection. His sin enters his house with him, lies gnawing upon his conscience, disturbs his repose with frightful dreams, and makes his house his hell. And even at the door, sin is not represented as an enemy upon the watch, ready to strike a mortal blow as soon as the door is opened; he "lieth at the door;" a sleeping posture: the man might escape before the enemy got upon his feet.

There is nothing therefore in this personification of sin to excite alarm.

3. But it is not the door of Cain's house that is intended in the text. It is not said, thy door, but, the door; which certainly cannot mean the door of his dwelling, but the door or entrance of the place where the family of Adam performed their acts of public worship. (1.) This was an act not of private, but public worship, as appears from this circumstance, that Cain and Abel were worshipping together. (2.) The altar on which Abel's sacrifice was consumed, could not, without the greatest inconvenience and peril, be in a private house. (3.) The time at which this worship was performed, (see marginal reading of verse 3,) "at the end of days." Of what days? The days of the year; for this was, most probably, the yearly sacrifice, answering to the great day of atonement, afterwards appointed under the law. (4.) They had a place appropriated to public worship. (See Genesis iii. 24, and Coke's Commentary on the place.) The cherubim were placed in the tabernacle, and in the temple, and were ever considered by the Jews as sacred to places of public worship. The piercing flame was the divine Shekinah; and these sacred emblems were placed "to preserve the way," open "to that tree of life," of which the tree in the garden was only figurative.

The door, therefore, in the text, was the entrance into their place of public worship, which was furnished at least with an altar, the holy cherubim, and the sacred fire that hovered over the tabernacle in the wilderness, and that was kept constantly burning in the temple. In this place the sons of Adam met to offer their yearly sacrifice. There could be nothing very alarming to a wicked man, to assure him that his sin lay at this door; for he would only have to keep from his place of worship, and he would be free of all disturbance from his sin.

But render the word, sin offering, and every difficulty vanishes. The Almighty expostulates with Cain on the unreasonableness of his anger. "If thou doest well," referring to his present manner of worship, "shalt thou

not be accepted," as well as thy brother? but if thou doest not well, by omitting a bloody sacrifice, thou hast no reasonable excuse for such omission, as a sin offering lieth at the door; an animal suitable for sacrifice, and many such being just at hand.

Thus we see God expostulated with Cain for not bringing a sin offering, and suspended his acceptance upon this condition. Now upon the Socinian hypothesis, the words ought to have run thus: If thou doest not well, repentance and reformation lie at the door. Cain we see was a Socinian; he was too haughty to solicit the divine favour by a sin offering.

This view of the subject is decisive of the divine approbation of sacrifices. God required one; and hence he rejected Cain's worship, because he had not brought it, and promised to accept him on his complying with the divine requisition. I know that the Socinians hold that Cain was rejected on account of immorality, not for any defect in the ceremonials of his religion; and I admit that he had sinned, previous to this act of worship, or he would not have sinned in it, by omitting the sin offering. But as Abel brought his *chatah*, his sin offering, he too must have sinned previous to this act of worship; but his sin offering atoned for his sin, and hence he was accepted. But if Cain was rejected merely on account of his immorality, and not on account of his irreligion also, how happens it that the Lord requires a religious rite, and says nothing about a reformation of conduct, in order to his acceptance? If there was a difference in the moral character of the two brothers, there was also a difference in their religious services. "Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." There are three other circumstances which strongly prove the divine institution of sacrifices.

1. Abel offered his in faith. (Heb. xi. 4.) Faith, the apostle saith, "cometh by the word of God." To have presented an animal sacrifice to God without a divine warrant, would have been an act of presumption, rather than of faith.

2. God, we have seen, appointed them a place of worship, and had placed in it cherubim, (similar, no doubt, to those that were afterwards placed in the holy place,) and the holy fire. It is quite incredible that he should do all this, and give them no direction how he ought to be worshipped; and supposing that he appointed the rites of worship, as well as the place, and its sacred furniture, we may be sure so good a man as Abel was, would use those rites: hence Abel offered a bloody sacrifice, and that because God had required it. And he offered it in faith, because God had promised to accept him for it: and hence Cain and his offering were rejected, because he did not present a bloody sacrifice, and was required, in order to his acceptance, to bring a sin offering.

3. "Unto Adam and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." We are not expressly told that the carcasses of the animals were offered in sacrifice, to atone for their sin; but as animal food was not then allowed, we cannot conceive to what other purpose they could be applied. Besides, when we see the Almighty so solicitous to promote their earthly comfort, we have no room to doubt but he gave them all necessary direction respecting his worship, on which their everlasting welfare entirely depended. And if this be admitted, it is certain that he instituted animal sacrifices, because otherwise, Abel would not have offered them; and the presumption is strong, that the animals with whose skins the bodies of Adam and Eve were covered, were offered in sacrifice for the sin of their souls.

Had there been no positive institutes of religion, Cain and Abel would have been at liberty to worship by what rites they thought proper; but it surely could never have come into the head of such a man as Abel, that the blood of an irrational brute could atone for the sin of a rational creature, had not God appointed and revealed it. But as from the circumstances already stated, it is certain that God did appoint the rites of his worship; so from the piety of the man, as well as

from the nature of the thing, we may be certain that Abel would not have offered blood, had it not been required by the institute.

Though we are informed of the sin of Adam and Eve, there is nothing said concerning the terms of their acceptance; but the little circumstantial evidence which may be collected, is all in favour of our system. The promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, has an undoubted allusion to the death of Christ; for it was by death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Heb. ii. 14.) And we have seen how probable it is that they offered animal sacrifices. But, there is no statement of, nor allusion to repentance and conversion, as being appointed the terms of man's acceptance with his Maker.

Though we have no further account of animal sacrifices being offered by the antediluvians; yet, one circumstance renders it extremely probable that they were regularly offered in public worship. The circumstance I allude to is, the distinction made between clean and unclean beasts. (Gen. vii. 2.) The distinction could not be made, to mark what were and what were not proper for food, as there is no evidence that animal food was used in that age. The distinction, therefore, could only be intended to designate, what animals were proper, and which were improper to be offered in sacrifice to God. So immediately after the flood, we find that Noah took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. (Gen. viii. 20.)

On reviewing this subject in reference to the antediluvian age, we find that sin offerings were required as a condition of acceptance; that there is sufficient evidence of the divine institution of sacrifices; and, that they were regularly offered in divine worship under that dispensation: whereas, during the whole of that period, there is not the least mention made of repentance and reformation, as the conditions of forgiveness. Upon Socinian principles, we might draw the inference that they are not required; as it is their usual

2. God, we have seen, appointed them a place of worship, and had placed in it cherubim, (similar, no doubt, to those that were afterwards placed in the holy place,) and the holy fire. It is quite incredible that he should do all this, and give them no direction how he ought to be worshipped; and supposing that he appointed the rites of worship, as well as the place, and its sacred furniture, we may be sure so good a man as Abel was, would use those rites: hence Abel offered a bloody sacrifice, and that because God had required it. And he offered it in faith, because God had promised to accept him for it: and hence Cain and his offering were rejected, because he did not present a bloody sacrifice, and was required, in order to his acceptance, to bring a sin offering.

3. "Unto Adam and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." We are not expressly told that the carcasses of the animals were offered in sacrifice, to atone for their sin; but as animal food was not then allowed, we cannot conceive to what other purpose they could be applied. Besides, when we see the Almighty so solicitous to promote their earthly comfort, we have no room to doubt but he gave them all necessary direction respecting his worship, on which their everlasting welfare entirely depended. And if this be admitted, it is certain that he instituted animal sacrifices, because otherwise, Abel would not have offered them; and the presumption is strong, that the animals with whose skins the bodies of Adam and Eve were covered, were offered in sacrifice for the sin of their souls.

Had there been no positive institutes of religion, Cain and Abel would have been at liberty to worship by what rites they thought proper; but it surely could never have come into the head of such a man as Abel, that the blood of an irrational brute could atone for the sin of a rational creature, had not God appointed and revealed it. But as from the circumstances already stated, it is certain that God did appoint the rites of his worship; so from the piety of the man, as well as

from the nature of the thing, we may be certain that Abel would not have offered blood, had it not been required by the institute.

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mode of argumentation, that if a certain doctrine be not mentioned in a certain portion of sacred scripture, it is not to be found in any part of it. But we shall only infer, that if sacrifices are not often mentioned in the history of this early age of the world, we are not to conclude that but little stress is to be laid upon them, which is what our opponents suppose, because matters which they consider of essential importance are not mentioned at all. We are sometimes told with a very triumphant air, that the word atonement is only mentioned once in the New Testament; and that once, men are said to have received it, and not God. (Rom. v. 11.) I beg leave, however, to remind them, that repentance is only mentioned once in the history of the antediluvians; and that once, God is said to have repented, and not man. (Gen. vi. 6.) Now this is just as good an argument against the necessity of repentance for man, as the other is against the necessity of atonement being made to God.

From the flood to the giving of the law, sacrifices were frequently offered. As soon as the flood had subsided, Noah builded an altar, etc. (Gen. viii. 20.) Abraham built an altar at Sichem, in the plain of Moreh, (Gen. xii. 6. 7.) When he removed from thence to Bethel, there he builded, etc. (Gen. xii. 8.) When he removed again to Hebron, he built there an altar unto the Lord. (Gen. xii. 18.) We are not, indeed, informed in express terms, that animals were offered on these altars; and, therefore, a Socinian would wonder for what purpose they are introduced here. They serve to show, that Abraham was in the habit of regularly worshipping God, by presenting something on the altar: what that something was, we learn from another text. When Abraham was going with his son, to the land of Moriah, to offer him up a sacrifice to God, the youth, ignorant of his father's intention, very innocently remarked, "My father, behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" The lad, surely, would not have inquired respecting a lamb for a burnt offering, if his father had not been in

the habit of presenting animal sacrifices. It could not have excited any surprise in him, that his father was not provided with a lamb, if he had never seen him sacrifice one. On this occasion, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a ram, etc. (Gen. xxii. 13.)

Isaac built an altar at Beersheba, and called on the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there; and there his servants digged a well. (Gen. xxvi. 23—26.) It appears, therefore, that this altar was built as the place of regular, public worship; and there can be no doubt, that he offered animal sacrifices upon it, after the example of his father.

When Jacob settled at Shalem, he erected there an altar. (Gen. xxxiii. 20.) When he removed to Beth-el, he did the same. (Gen. xxxv. 1—7.) When Jacob, on his journey to Egypt, came to Beersheba, the place where his father had built an altar to God, he offered sacrifices unto the God of his father. (Gen. xlv. 1.)

That Job lived in the patriarchal age, is very evident, from the state of society and manners described in his book; from his acting as priest in his family; and, particularly, from his great age. He lived one hundred and forty years after his affliction; and before it, he had ten children grown up and settled in the world. Suppose him to have married at twenty nine years of age, the earliest period at which any of those patriarchs did marry, who lived about two hundred years, and he then must have been sixty years of age, or more, when his affliction took place. On the lowest calculation, therefore, Job must have lived two hundred years at least; and cannot, with any propriety, be placed lower than the time of Abraham; though the probability is, that he lived a few years earlier.

Job, as a priest, offered sacrifices for his children, not occasionally, but continually. (Chap. i. 5.) His friends also brought their animal sacrifices to Job. (Chap. xlii. 8.) The above are all the texts which relate to sacrifices in the patriarchal age; and I must

beg leave to trespass a little on the patience of my readers, while I make a few remarks on them : —

1. We learn that altars were erected by the patriarchs, as places of regular public worship.

2. We have no account of anything being offered on these altars, but animal sacrifices. Noah offered clean beasts and fowls. Abraham intended to offer his son, but he substituted a ram in his stead ; and it is evident, from the question of his son respecting a lamb for a burnt offering, which experience alone could suggest, that he was in the habit of offering animal sacrifices on the family altar ; for, if like wicked Cain, he had offered nothing but the fruits of the ground, he might have inquired, where are the corn and the wine for a meat and drink offering ? But he would no more have asked for a lamb than for a camel, had he been a stranger to animal sacrifices. Isaac would, of course, offer animals, after the example of his father, on the altar which he built at Beersheba. Jacob would copy the example of his father Isaac ; and, when we read, that at Beersheba he offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac, the language pretty clearly indicates, that he offered animals. Job offered animals for his sons and his friends.

3. These animal sacrifices are called burnt offerings. (Gen. viii. 20 ; Gen. xxii. 7, 13 ; Job. i. 5 ; Job xlii. 8.)

4. These sacrifices were sin offerings. Job stated the reason why he offered burnt offerings for his sons : “ It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.” God’s wrath was kindled against Job’s friends. Job acted as their priest, presented their sacrifices and prayed for them ; God accepted Job, and forgave them.

5. He who presented the sacrifices, accompanied them with prayers. (Gen. xii. 8 ; xxvi. 25 ; and Job xlii. 8, 10.)

6. We come now to the question, whether these were supernumary acts of worship which God permitted, but did not require : “ God said to Jacob, arise, go up

to Bethel, and dwell there ; and make there an altar unto God," etc. (Gen. xxxv. 1.) There cannot well be a more positive command than this ; and that God who required the erection of the altar, required the service to be performed at it ; and that service we have seen was animal sacrifices for sin, accompanied with prayers. God commanded Job's friends, "Take unto you now," etc. These passages are decisive upon the subject, that God required altars and burnt offerings for sin in his public worship, previous to the giving of the law.

With what face then, can the Socinians affirm, that God never required anything more than repentance and reformation, in order to forgiveness ? Repentance is not once commanded in the whole history of the patriarchal age. The only place where it is mentioned, is Job xlii. 6 : "Job repented in sackcloth and ashes." In this instance it was a good, not a bad man, which repented. Reformation is twice insisted on by Elihu. Hence there is more evidence in favour of sacrifices for sin, than for repentance and reformation. Not that we consider repentance and reformation as of inferior importance ; but when Socinians urge that sin offerings cannot be very important, because but seldom mentioned, we think it a sufficient answer to say, that things which even they consider as of prime consequence, are not mentioned so frequently.

According to the Socinian mode of interpretation, it is impossible to prove any doctrine whatever. Thus, to show that atonement by sacrifice is not necessary, they quote a number of texts which speak of God's being merciful to sinners, and in which there is no allusion to sacrifices ; this may easily be done ; but who, besides a Socinian, would conclude from the silence of scripture in one place, against its positive testimony in another ? Many texts may be quoted, in which the forgiveness of sin is promised without any stipulation for repentance ; are we to infer from these, that repentance is unnecessary ? Others are silent on the subject of reformation ; are we, therefore, to conclude, that reformation is not requisite ? Others make no

mention of any condition at all on man's part. God is said to forgive for his name's sake, his mercy's sake, etc.; are we to deduce from thence, that God does not require either prayer, or repentance, or reformation, or faith, because none of them are expressly mentioned in some passages which contain promises of pardon? And if you want to exclude the name and mercy of God, as the reasons of forgiveness, it is very easy to find texts that are silent respecting them. The plan of human redemption cannot be fully developed, in half a dozen lines. We learn one truth from one text, and another from another text, etc. One text speaks of repentance, another of prayer, a third of forsaking sin, a fourth of faith, and a fifth of atonement by blood: a few texts contain two or more of these particulars; but no one text contains the whole. It is by taking a comprehensive view of scripture, and connecting together the truths scattered over its surface, that we obtain a full and harmonious view of the whole system of salvation.

Apply Socinian logic to the evidence collected above, that sacrifices of atonement were regularly offered in the public worship of the patriarchs, and the whole is soon reduced to a cypher. Thus —

1. Many of the texts speak only of altars, and say nothing of animal sacrifices. True; but I suppose the altars were not built to be looked at. Other texts speak of the persons who built these altars, or of their fathers, as offering bloody sacrifices; and we nowhere read of any other sacrifices being offered in that age; hence we infer, that animal sacrifices were offered on these altars.

2. It is not said that either Noah or Abraham presented their offerings to make atonement for sin: very well; and what then? Are we to conclude that these burnt offerings were only expressions of dependence on God, and of gratitude for his favours? No man would draw this conclusion, whose creed did not require it, because not a single instance can be collected from the patriarchal age to support it. Noah's

burnt offerings were undoubtedly deprecatory. "And the Lord smelled," etc. And in the only two texts where the design of burnt offerings is specified, we find they were intended to make atonement for sin; no man therefore whose mind is not biased by hypothesis, will ascribe to them any other object.

3. Some of the sacrifices were occasional. Granted. But others were performed regularly, as constituent parts of public worship. Job offered for the sins of his sons continually. When the patriarchs removed to a new situation, there they built an altar and called on the name of the Lord. When Jacob was commanded to go to Bethel, and dwell there; he was at the same time commanded to build there an altar. It is impossible to make common sense of these passages on any other supposition, than that these were family altars, where they performed public worship. It is only by such passages that we can prove the patriarchs had any regular worship; and they equally serve to prove that sin offerings formed an essential part of that worship.

Thus you see that by taking a full and connected view of the subject of sacrifices during the patriarchal age, you perceive that they were bloody, divinely instituted, formed an essential part of public worship, and were to expiate sin.

That bloody sacrifices were required under the law in order to the forgiveness of sin, is so fully and clearly revealed, that the transcription of all the texts which relate to this subject would make a fashionable quarto volume, without adding a single note or comment. The apostle has summed up the whole in a few words. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb ix. 22.)

As our opponents cannot deny that sacrifices were appointed under the law, they endeavour to lessen their importance by insinuating, that they were rather tolerated, than demanded; and that no great stress was laid upon them. And yet the words of the apostle just quoted, prove the direct contrary. The opinion of the Jewish doctors exactly coincided with that of

the apostle upon this subject. "There is no remission of sins," say they, "without blood; as it is written, Leviticus xvii. 11, 'For it is blood that maketh atonement for the soul.'" (Ainsworth.)

The following texts, Psalm xl. 6; Psalm l. 8—14; Isaiah i. 11—13, and lxvi. 3, are quoted to show, that no stress is laid upon sacrifices. But it should be remembered that St. Paul quotes the first of these passages, (Heb. x. 5—8,) not to show that God was indifferent about the Jewish sacrifices, but that they were to be superseded under the gospel. The words of David therefore cannot justly be considered as a declaration of the nonimportance of sacrifices in his day, but as a prediction that Jewish sacrifices would cease to be offered under the gospel. The other quotation from the Psalms is so similar to the above, that it will admit of the same answer. By considering the context of the two passages from Isaiah, it appears that the people were sunk in their morals, and paid no attention to any other part of religion than its ceremonies; no wonder therefore that their offerings were rejected with contempt. Prayer is sometimes reprobated in stronger terms than these; and yet even Socinians will surely grant that prayer is a duty of the greatest importance. The prayer of the wicked is sin. "Ye shall call, but I will not answer; ye shall seek me early, but ye shall not find me."

The following texts are supposed to prove that much more stress is laid upon morals than upon sacrifices. (Jer. vii. 22, 23; 1 Sam. 15—22; Micah vi. 6—8.) The words of Jeremiah, "For I spake not," etc., cannot be taken absolutely. In the first interview which God had with Moses, he commanded him to deliver this message unto Pharaoh. (Exod. iii. 18.) This message was delivered. (Exod. v. 3.) The whole dispute with Pharaoh was on the subject of letting the people go, that they might sacrifice unto the Lord. Thus the first time Pharaoh relented, he said, etc. (Exod. viii. 8.) The second time he relented, we read, Exodus v. 25—22, "And Pharaoh called

unto Moses," etc. "Again Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said," etc. (Chap. x. 24 — 26.)

The institution of the passover was previous to the giving of the law; and this is expressly called a sacrifice. (Exod. xii. 27; Deut. xvi. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 7.) And it is worthy of note, that the lamb was substituted in the place of the first born. Had the lamb not been sacrificed, the first born would most certainly have been slain. It was not moral obedience, but the blood of the lamb which averted the sword of the destroying angel.

The sacrifice of the firstlings was instituted before the law was given; (see Exod. xiii. 11 — 16;) where every Jewish parent was required to give the following account of that matter to his children: "By strength of hand," etc. When therefore Socinians quote the words of Jeremiah to prove that sacrifices were not instituted until after the law, their conclusion is contrary to plain facts; and the inference they draw from this conclusion, that sacrifices being appointed after the law, are of inferior importance, falls to the ground. If the priority of institution proves a superiority in importance, it will follow, that as sacrifices were instituted previous to the law, they are of more importance than moral obedience; but we shall not push the advantages we take of their weakness to this extreme. The meaning of the prophet Jeremiah is sufficiently obvious. It appears from the context, that the Jews neglected the moral law, and only attended to the ceremonies of their religion. The prophet reminds them that when God brought their fathers out of Egypt, he did not command them respecting sacrifices only, which was all that they attended to; but concerning moral obedience also, which they entirely neglected. Thus when the carnal Jews followed Christ merely for the loaves and fishes, and neglected their salvation, our Lord rebuked them by saying, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth," etc. (John vi. 27.) The meaning whereof is plain enough. They were not forbid to work for perishing food, for that would have been in-

consistent with other texts, which require diligence in business ; but they were not to work for perishing food only. This kind of phraseology is common in the sacred writings, and is so easy to be understood, that no one will pervert it, who has not a favourite system to serve by it. I have spent so much time upon this point, not because of its difficulty, but because of the importance which our opponents attach to it.

The obedience spoken of by Samuel to Saul, (1 Sam. xv. 22,) is to be classed under the duties of piety, rather than those of morality. God had commanded Saul to destroy the Amalekites, their oxen and sheep, camels and asses. Instead of punctually executing this special commission of the Almighty, a reserve was made of the best of the oxen and sheep ; and why ? The pretence was, to perform an act of piety, by sacrificing them to the Lord ; but the real reason was, no doubt, to make a feast of them. They were devoted to destruction, as accursed of the Lord ; and therefore had they been destroyed according to the commandment, it would have been unlawful to eat them ; but it was lawful to feast on sacrifices, and therefore the expedient was adopted of presenting these devoted victims unto God. Saul knew in his conscience, that his religious pretence was not valid ; but the people were clamorous for a feast, and he yielded to their importunity. (Verse 24.) It would have been equally improper to have destroyed the animals at Havilah, had God commanded them to be brought to Gilgal for sacrifice. No comparison is instituted here as to whether the moral or sacrificial precepts are of the greatest importance. Under the circumstances of the case, obedience would have been better than sacrifice, because the one was required, the other not. Had they done both,—destroyed the cattle of the Amalekites, and sacrificed to God in Gilgal of their own, we should have heard nothing about obedience being better than sacrifices ; circumstances may make it proper to omit the practice of many moral virtues. If a man's property will only

just answer the demands of his creditors, he ought not to bestow it in acts of charity. It is better for him to be just, than to be charitable. If I meet an object in distress, perishing through want, and have only twenty shillings, all of which sum is due to my creditors; mercy ought to prevail against justice, if the life of a fellow creature be worth more than a pound. In this case, it is better to be charitable than to pay debts. If cases, therefore, arising out of peculiar circumstances are to be magnified into general rules, one general rule will be, "It is better to be just than merciful;" and another will be, "It is better to be merciful than inhumanly just." Obedience would have been better than sacrifice in the case mentioned by Samuel, for this plain reason; because the animals selected for sacrifice, were ordered to be destroyed; and, therefore, the offering of them was an act of disobedience. But in other cases sacrifice was an act of obedience, and as necessary and important to be performed by a Jewish sinner as any moral precept, if it be true that "without shedding of blood is no remission."

It appears from Micah vi. 6—8, that the Jews brought their offerings to the Lord, but they omitted the practice of justice, humanity, and humble piety. They are taught by the prophet in this scripture, that sacrifices, unaccompanied with piety and virtue, are of no avail; and, therefore, he insists on the discharge of these duties. The reason why sacrifices are not mentioned, as required in verse 8, is, because he is there treating on neglected duties, and they did not neglect that part of divine service. But when they grew as careless about offerings, as they were now about the practice of piety and virtue, they were severely reprimanded for their indifference. (See Mal. i. 8, 13, 14, and chap. iii. 7—9.)

If I were disposed to argue upon Socinian principles, I could prove from the prophet Malachi, that tithes and offerings only are necessary in order to acceptance, without morality; just in the same way that they attempt to prove from the passages just considered, that

morality only is necessary, without sacrifices. (See chap. iii. 10—12.) The tithe included the flocks and herds, as well as the corn. (Lev. xxvii. 32.) In this passage nothing more is required, in order to their acceptance, than the tribute to his altar prescribed by the law. Not a word is said concerning moral virtue. But the absurdity of this Socinian mode of interpretation, has been sufficiently pointed out in the preceding observations. When we reflect, that God instituted every rite and ceremony of the Aaronical priesthood; that he set apart a whole tribe to perform these sacred services; that he cursed the people when they neglected to bring such sacrifices as were required by the law, (Mal. i. 14;) and, that withholding sacrifices was accounted a robbery of God; (Mal. iii. 8;) that he promised the choicest of his blessings to those who conformed to his institutions; (Mal. iii. 10—12;) and that, in fact, they could not obtain the pardon of sin, without offering animal sacrifices; (Heb. x;) when, I say, these things are considered, I believe it will be difficult to show, that there was anything in the Jewish religion upon which greater stress was laid, than upon sacrifices.

SECTION IV.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF SUBSTITUTION AS APPLIED TO JEWISH SACRIFICES.

WE will now proceed to consider the doctrine of substitution as applied to the Jewish sacrifices. This doctrine is clearly contained in Leviticus xvii. 11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood," etc. Here the word *naphash*, is used three times. In the first it is rendered life, in the other two it is rendered soul. Parkhurst is of opinion, that this word never means soul; and certainly, in this text, it ought to be translated by the same term. A literal and proper rendering is, "For the life of the flesh is the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atone-

ment for your lives : for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the life." If this passage does not teach that the life of the beast is substituted in the place of the life of man, there can be no meaning in language.

After this explicit declaration of the reason and design of animal sacrifices, there is no mystery in the meaning of those numerous passages, where atonement is said to be made for sin by the blood of victims. For if life had not been forfeited by sin, the blood of the animal could not have been an atonement for the life of the sinner.

I am aware that the Socinians deny that all sins deserve death ; and, that they accuse us of representing the Almighty as a Draco, whose sanguinary code of laws made every crime capital. But, that the penalty of death is due to every transgression of the divine law, must be admitted ; it being a point too clearly revealed to be denied by any, who respect the authority of scripture. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." "The wages of sin is death." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." We allow that the laws of Draco were sanguinary ; but we deny that the divine laws deserve that character, though the penalty of death be affixed to every transgression of them, and that for the following reasons : —

1. Draco's laws admitted of no atonement, the divine laws did. By the sacrifice of an animal, the desert of sin was publicly acknowledged, and the sinner was spared. Who but the proud and the presumptuous would deny, that he owed his life to divine mercy ?

2. The laws of Draco were manifestly unjust, because they made no difference between lesser and greater sins. In the divine laws this distinction is recognised, as the lesser sins might be expiated by sacrifices ; while the greater only, such as blasphemy,

murder, etc., subjected the offender to death, without mercy. This distinction will be more clearly manifested at the day of judgment. "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked," etc.

3. No earthly sovereign has the same authority over human life, which the divine Being has. In point of fact, every offending subject of the divine government suffers death, and this is in consequence of an article in the constitution of it, which makes death the wages of sin. Dare a Socinian say that this is unjust? And will he infer from it, that every earthly monarch has a right to put all his subjects to death? God will raise all his creatures to life again, and fix their eternal destinies according to their characters. Can any other sovereign do this?

It is objected by our opponents, that in sacrifices of atonement, the life of the victim could not always be offered for the life of a sinner, because they were sometimes offered for things without life; as the tabernacle, altar, and sanctuary; (Lev. xvi. 33;) and sometimes for persons in cases which were not sinful; as a woman after childbearing, and a leper after cure. (Lev. xii.; xiv.)

The reason of atonement being made for inanimate things, such as the sanctuary and altar, is thus stated, verses 16 — 19 of Leviticus xvi.; and the bullock and goat whose blood made these atonements are expressly called sin offerings, in verses 11 and 15 of the same chapter. No one can be stupid enough to think that the altar had so sinned; but the sacred places were defiled with the sins of the people; and sin could only be removed, even from places or things contaminated with it, by the blood of either the sinner, or of his sin offering in his place. We have a remarkable instance of this, in the case of uncertain murder. It is laid down as a law, (Num. xxxv. 30 — 33,) that a murderer should be put to death. But if the murderer could not be found, the elders of the city nearest to the place where the murder was committed, were directed

to sacrifice an heifer, to wash their hands over it, and to say, "Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it," etc. (Deut. xxi. 7.) "From whence it appears," says Bishop Stillingfleet, Discourse on Christ's Satis., page 185, "that upon the shedding of blood, there was a guilt contracted upon the whole land wherein it was shed, and in case the murderer was not found to expiate that guilt by his own blood, then it was to be done by the cutting off of the head of an heifer instead of him." It deserves particular notice, that the whole of this case refers to the removal of guilt from the land, and not from the murderer, for whom the law admitted of no atonement. And there can be no expiation for the land of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. (See Marginal reading.) And yet if the murderer could not be found, as we have seen, the blood of a beast was substituted in his stead. Here we see how life may be forfeited in the pollution of a place, and how an animal sacrifice may expiate it. Thus are the arguments of our enemies turned against themselves.

Though it is no sin in a woman to bear a child, yet the pains of childbearing are the effects of sin. "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." The offering by which atonement was made for her, is called a sin offering. Similar remarks apply to the leper. All the diseases to which we are subject, are the effects of sin; and leprosy in the eastern countries, according to the account of travellers, is one of the most distressing complaints with which a human being can be afflicted. It was highly proper, therefore, says Dr. Jennings, that on occasion of deliverance from these remarkable effects of sin, there should be an humble acknowledgment made of the desert of it in general, and a peculiar sacrifice offered for original and for all actual transgressions: which I take to be the intent of such sacrifices on these occasions."

Had there been no sin to atone for in such cases, some other offering would have been appointed rather than

a sin offering ; and as the woman did not sin in bearing a child, nor the leper in suffering that dreadful disease, their offerings must have been intended to atone for the sins they had actually committed : and no season could be more proper for presenting their sacrifices, and inspiring them with a religious dread of sin, than after they had suffered so much in consequence of it. Upon the hypothesis of our opponents, the sin offerings on these occasions are perfectly inexplicable.

It is objected further, that the sacrifices under the law could not be vicarious, because, in capital cases, such as murder, no sacrifice was appointed for the sinner. What has been already said, is a sufficient answer to this ; but as it is repeatedly and triumphantly introduced into almost every Socinian publication, I will honour it with more particular notice. Though it has been shown that in the sin offering, the life of the animal was substituted for the life of the offender ; it does not surely follow, that because an animal sacrifice atoned for some sins where life was forfeited, therefore it must for all. There are some crimes which our laws consider capital, that may be forgiven the sinner, through what is called the benefit of the clergy. Now what would be thought of the intellect of a man who should affirm, that the benefit of the clergy does not extend to the saving of a man's life, because there are crimes for which he may be hanged, without benefit of the clergy ? And yet it is a fact, that the benefit of the clergy is never interposed, but to save life.

It is again objected, that a capital offender was pardoned without a sacrifice. Though David was guilty of murder, he was freely pardoned, without a sin offering, as himself observes. (Psalms li. 16, 17.)

Certainly the law made no provision of atonement in such a case, but required that the murderer should be surely put to death. But though God did not admit of an animal sacrifice to atone for a crime of such magnitude, he took, in David's case, what was much more valuable, a human life ; (2 Sam. xii. 13, 14 ;) for nothing can be clearer than that in this instance,

the death of the child was substituted instead of the death of David.

The priest was the representative of the people before God ; and hence their sins were supposed to be transferred to him, that he might expiate them by the sacrifices which he offered. (Exod. xxviii. 38 ; Lev. x. 17.) The word *nasa*, in these and many other texts, rendered, to bear, when joined with sin, I believe always means, to bear the punishment of sin. Thus is it to be understood in Lev. xix. 8 ; xx. 17, 19 ; xxiv. 15 ; Num. xiv. 33 ; Ezek. xvi. 52, 54, 58 ; xviii. 19, 20, and xxxix. 26.

It is true this word sometimes signifies, to bear away, to carry, to bring, etc. Hence the Socinians have concluded, that the sin offerings which bore the iniquity of the children of Israel, bare their sins away, not as substitutes, but merely as a medium through which God pardoned their sins. But when we desire them to explain why sacrifices were employed as a medium of forgiveness, if they were not vicarious, they are very much at a loss for an answer. The above instances are more than sufficient to show, that when *nasa* is connected with sin, it signifies, to bear the punishment of it. Many other instances of the same kind might be added ; and I am not aware that one can be produced to the contrary.

It was on account of the priest bearing the sin of the people, and this sin meriting death, that he was in such imminent danger of being struck dead, if he did not perform the functions of his office with strict propriety. It was of the utmost importance to have on all the sacred vestments, or he could not make atonement for the people, and consequently must bear the punishment of their sins in his own person. (Exod. xxviii. 34, 35, 42, 43. (See Ainsworth on the last verse.)

If the sins of the people had not deserved death, the priest would not have been put to death, in the case of his bearing their iniquity in his own person, for having committed a mistake in the ceremony of making atonement. When, therefore we read that God had

given the sin offering to bear the iniquity of the congregation, it is certain, that the death of the sin offering was accepted in the place of the death of sinners.

The sins of the people were supposed to be transferred to the head of the priest; (Exod. xxviii. 36 — 38;) and on the great day of atonement they were transferred by him to the head of the scape goat. (Lev. xvi. 21, 22.) The goat that was slain showed the method, and the scape goat the effect of expiation.

As the blood of the sacrifices, according to the law, was to be brought into the holy of holies only once a year, the penalty was death to the high priest, if he presented himself before God in that holy place at any other time. (Lev. xvi. 2.) And the reason was, because he was a sinner, and therefore must suffer death as the penalty of sin; for if he appeared before God as a sinner, without offering the appointed substitute, he suffered the consequences of it in his own person. But when he appeared at the appointed time with the blood of the victim, it was accepted in his stead, and his life was spared. (Lev. xvi. 11 — 13.) It is, I think, impossible to demonstrate more strongly than such texts do, that the animal sacrifices were substitutes for sinners.

Some, perhaps, may think that the threatening of death to Aaron, was on account of the presumption of presenting himself to God at proscribed times, and without attending to the prescribed ceremonies, and not on account of his other sins. Suppose we grant this, will a Socinian contend, that the omission of a religious ceremony deserves a greater punishment, than the violation of a moral precept? If not, they must allow, that every violation of the moral law deserves death; and surely those who make morality everything in religion, will not magnify ceremonies above it! Could a stronger proof than this be desired, that the wages of every sin is death? And can anything be more fatal to a rationalist's creed, than the belief that it was death under the law to approach God without a sacrifice?

No man can see God's face and live. (Exod. xxxiii. 20.) The reason is, because every man is a sinner; hence, when Isaiah (chap. vi. 1—5) had a visionary sight of God, he looked on himself as a dead man on this very account. "Woe is me," said he, "for I am undone, cut off, because I am a man of unclean lips," etc. The saints in a glorified state, being free from both the guilt and pollution of sin, will see the face, or glory of God. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God," and that most intimately. (1 John iii. 2, and 1 Cor. xiii. 12.) The angels being spotless beings, do always see the face of God. (Matt. xviii. 10.) The mercy seat was the throne of Jehovah. Here he was enthroned in majesty; and from this sacred place he dispersed his mercy to his people. (Exod. xxv. 17—22.) But as no sinner could see God's face and live, when Aaron went into the holy place, he took a censer full of burning coals from the altar, on which the sin offering was burning, and putting incense thereon, he covered the mercy seat with smoke, and thus hid himself from the face or glory of God, and his life was preserved. "I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. And he," Aaron, "shall put the incense upon the fire before (*pani Jehovah*) the face of Jehovah, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat, that he die not." (Lev. xvi. 2—13.) After this he proceeded to furnish the atonement for himself, his family, and for all the congregation of Israel, by sprinkling the blood of the sin offering upon and before the mercy seat.

It was an essential point to take the fire for burning the incense from the altar of burnt offering; for Nadab and Abihu were consumed for burning the incense with other fire. The smoke of the incense represented the smoke of the sin offering; the sweetness of the incense represented the acceptableness of the sacrifice to God; and the blood, being the vital part, was presented in lieu of the sinner.

In summing up this argument, we see that the priest was liable to be put to death for his own sins,

but his life was preserved by the substitution of an animal; and that, as bearing the sins of the people, he was exposed to death on their account, but was preserved again, by a vicarious sacrifice. What a comment is all this upon that explanation of the nature and design of sacrifices — “The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul!” (Lev. xvii. 11.) What are we to think of Socinian modesty, which can roundly affirm, that no sacrifices for sin were appointed in cases where life was forfeited, since we see that they were appointed in no other?

After what has been said, it will not be necessary to detain you long on the meaning of the word *caphar*, which usually is rendered atonement. This root undoubtedly means, to cover. It sometimes, and indeed generally, includes the idea of the preservation of what is covered, in consequence of the covering receiving the injury to which it was exposed. Thus in Genesis vi. 14, the first time this word occurs in scripture, the pitch or bitumen with which the ark was covered, was intended to preserve the covered matter of the ark from the water and weather, by receiving the injury upon itself. So in making atonement for the people, the *caphar* or preserver of their lives, consisted of the animal sacrifices which were offered for them. These were interposed betwixt the offenders and the offended. The smoke and blood of the victims, covered the face of Jehovah and his mercy seat; hid the offenders from the anger of his countenance, so that their lives were preserved.

It is the continual sing-song of Socinians, that no atonements were provided in cases where life was forfeited. But how could the sin offering cover or shelter the life of the sinner, if it was not forfeited by sin? It is, however, demanded, where the people are threatened with death, if they did not bring their sacrifices of atonement. I answer, that every individual was not required to bring an animal for sacrifice, when

atonement was made for all the sins of the people: a few sacrifices served for the whole nation. On the great day of atonement in particular, only two sin offerings were appointed; a bullock for the high priest and his family, and two goats for the people: with these two sin offerings, he made atonement for himself and his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. But though each individual had not to bring his sacrifice for himself, he had certain duties to attend to, in order to secure an interest in the sin offering which was provided for the people; if he omitted these, he lost his benefit in the atonement, and was destroyed. (Lev. xxiii. 27—30.) Here the duties are clearly pointed out. On this day of atonement, first, there was to be a cessation from labour, the same as on the sabbath day. Secondly: the people were to afflict their souls; by which phrase the Jews understood, fasting. Death was the consequence of disobedience to either of these commands. In the case of working on that day, the law is strongly expressed: "Him will I destroy from among his people." He who violated the fast was to be cut off. Ainsworth on the place remarks, that in the Greek and Chaldee, it is rendered, destroyed; and in the Targum of Jonathan, destroyed by death. Now the only reason assigned why they were required to rest and fast on this day is, "for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God." But if a man's sins had not deserved death, he ought not to be put to death for paying no regard to the atonement of them. Suppose a man had committed a crime in this country, which subjected him to a year's imprisonment; but on condition of serving his sovereign for a day, he might obtain forgiveness; if he refused to atone for his fault on so easy a condition, justice could do no more than keep him in prison for the twelve months: it would be a flagrant act of injustice to hang the man, because he did not choose to perform the condition of pardon. When a sinner refuses the terms of mercy, justice can only execute the penalty of the law upon him. He, therefore,

who paid no regard to the day of atonement, could only suffer what his sins had merited; and as, in fact, he was doomed to death, it follows, that his sins deserved it. But if the most holy man in the nation had kept the day of atonement as a common day, he would have been destroyed. "For whatsoever soul it is that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it is that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people." (Lev. xxiii. 29, 30.) He therefore who had committed the fewest sins, merited death on account of them, and could only be forgiven by attending to the appointed rites of the atonement.

It would have been singular indeed, if the sins of the people had not merited death, and yet that death should be the consequence of omitting the slightest ceremonies of expiation. For the priest to omit any of the sacerdotal vestments, was death; to appear before the mercy seat without blood and the smoke of incense, was death; to burn the incense with fire that was not taken from under the sin offering, was death; and for the people to refuse their concurrence in the expiation, by taking their ordinary food, and following their ordinary occupations on that sacred day, was death. If all this does not prove that life was forfeited by sin, and that expiation was for the life, it is impossible for language to prove anything.

The transactions of this important day serve to illustrate some of the truths of the gospel. The blood of the sin offering was shed for all, not for a part of the congregation of Israel. "The blood of Christ was shed" for the sins of all mankind, not merely for the sins of some. (1 John ii. 2.) Those Jews who refused to perform the conditions required, lost the benefit of the expiation made for them, and were destroyed; and those sinners who refuse to perform the conditions of the new covenant, lose the benefit of the expiation made by Christ for them, and perish everlastingly. As the expiation under the law was in the blood offered by

the priest, and not in the conditions required of the people ; so the expiation under the gospel is in the blood of Christ, which was shed for the remission of sins, and not in the conditions of repentance, faith, and obedience.

I know that some texts may be quoted, where the word *caphar* is taken in a different sense, than when applied to the expiation of guilt. Thus when applied to hoar frost, (Job. xxxviii. 29,) the idea is simply that of a covering of the ground ; it does not include the protection of the ground, nor the injury of the *caphar*. In Isaiah xxviii. 18, the word *caphar* is applied to a covenant, and is rendered disannul. The allusion is to an engraving on a stone or table, which by being covered, or smeared over, the writing is obliterated, and thus the covenant is annulled. Here the covenant which is *caphered* is not preserved, but destroyed, and the *capher* is not supposed to be injured. Sometimes the word *capher* includes the idea of substitution, when suffering is excluded by the nature of the subject. In the case of an ox having killed a person, it was to be stoned ; and if the owner had been previously informed that the ox was wont to push with his horns, he himself was to be put to death ; yet he might in this case sometimes save his life by paying a fine to the relatives of the deceased, which was called his *capher*, (see Exod. xxi. 30,) or the ransom price of his life. But though a sum of money was his *capher* or atonement to the relatives of the deceased, yet a sin offering was the only atonement he could present to God.

But still the word generally means the security of the thing covered, by the cover being interposed to take the injury upon itself. The subject may be made pretty plain to the English reader, by observing, that the English word cover, agrees with the Hebrew word *capher*, both in sound and sense, and is, therefore, most probably derived from it. Now the word cover, is usually applied to subjects which take in the idea of protection, by the cover receiving upon itself the injury to

which the thing covered is exposed. Thus a house is a covering to a family, and shelters it from the attacks of the elements, by receiving them upon itself. Clothes, carriages, etc., are coverings for persons; and cases of various kinds, for goods; in these instances the coverings are interposed to preserve what is covered, by receiving the injury in its stead. So in military tactics, when an army is marching in an enemy's country, there is generally employed what is called a covering party, which interposes between the main army and the enemy, to preserve the army by receiving the attacks of the enemy upon itself. Now what would be thought of the intellects of a man who should affirm, that the lives of the covering party are not exposed in affording protection to the main army, because a shower of snow is said to cover the ground? but the snow has no life to expose, and it does not cover the ground by way of protecting it.

The Hebrew *capher*, like the English cover, is applied to several different subjects; and the meaning of the word varies according to the subjects to which it is applied. But when an animal is called a *capher*, or cover for the life of a man, it is evident enough that his life is supposed to be in danger; and when an animal cannot be a cover for the life of man but by its blood, which is its life, being presented to God, it is a very clear case that God accepts the life of the sacrifice in the stead of the life of the sinner.

Nothing can be more puerile, than the wretched attempts of Socinians to reconcile the doctrine of sacrifices with their system. They tell us that sacrifices would avail nothing without purity. We grant it. But we beg leave to remind them, that if the most holy Jew had not kept the day of atonement, he would have been destroyed. (Lev. xxiii. 27—30.) They say the sacrifices were intended to bring the people nigh to God. We grant it. They had no access to him but by blood. The priest was their representative; and we have seen that if he approached God without the blood of an animal, which was its life, his life was forfeited and taken.

They say the sacrifices were intended to promote moral purity. We grant it. And what stronger motive could the people have to love and serve God, than the consideration, that when they had forfeited their lives by sin, he had mercifully accepted the life of an animal in their stead? I should be glad to know how, upon Socinian principles, animal sacrifices could promote moral purity. Lastly: they say, that sacrifices were federal rites, by which the people entered into friendship with God; and when they had sinned, by which they renewed their friendship with him. In proof of this we are told, that part of the animal was presented to God on the altar, and part eaten by the offerers; eating and drinking together being an ancient rite and token of friendship among men. But what is fatal to this fine theory of friendship is, the ordinance that "no sin offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation, to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt with fire." (Lev. vi. 30.) On the great day of atonement, when one would have expected a most solemn renewal of this friendship, instead of the people's eating and drinking before the Lord, "the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry without the camp, and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung." (Lev. xvi. 27.) And besides that, the people were not allowed to eat of the sacrifices; we observed above, that they were required, on pain of death, to keep this day as a fast, instead of a feast. It must have been an odd sort of a friendship feast, when the master of it ordered all the food provided, except the little which he himself took, to be destroyed, without allowing the guests to taste a mouthful, either of that, or any other kind of meat. This is truly a very rational way of explaining the nature and design of sacrifices!

The mercy seat was God's throne of grace. How awful, to see such a throne covered with blood; and the ground before it covered with blood; the altars sprin-

kled with blood, and the ground around them soaked with it! The blood is the life; and if the life was not forfeited by sin, the God worshipped by the Jews was a Moloch, rather than the Father of mercies. But when we consider that the blood of sacrifices was an expiation for the lives of sinners, we see the justice of God in taking life for sin, and his mercy in taking a substitute in the place of the sinner. And as justice and mercy must both be glorified in the pardon of offenders, without shedding of blood there was and could be no remission.

SECTION V.

ON THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

THE nature of the priesthood of Christ is a question of vital importance, and shall be carefully examined in this chapter. It is a rather singular circumstance, that a celebrated writer and missionary in the cause of rational christianity, has published an octavo volume of more than four hundred pages against the doctrine of atonement; has devoted one chapter to remarks on the several offices of Christ; has divided this chapter into ten sections, but has not devoted even one poor section to his priestly office. But on second thoughts, he certainly acted a very rational part in leaving out this office, as it has very much perplexed the most sagacious of his brethren.

Are we to understand the priesthood of Christ figuratively or literally? Our opponents contend for the former, and plead that christians are called priests; are said to offer up spiritual sacrifices; are exhorted to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God, etc. (Rev. v. 10; 1 Peter ii. 5; Rom. xii. 8.) These are supposed to be figurative allusions to the Jewish priests and sacrifices; and it is taken for granted, that when Christ is called priest and sacrifice, we are to understand the words in the same sense. This is the

hinge upon which the controversy turns, as far as scripture authority can decide it; I shall, therefore, enter pretty fully into it.

Instead of the priesthood of Christ consisting in nothing but figurative allusions to the priesthood of Aaron, the direct contrary is the fact; for the Aaronical priesthood is expressly declared to be figurative of Christ's. "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience," etc. (Heb. ix. 9—12.) The priesthood of Aaron was a shadow, that of Christ is the substance. (Heb. x. 1—12, at large.) It is really astonishing to witness the irreverence of Socinians upon the subject. When pressed with texts which speak of Christ as a sacrifice for sin, they reply, the language is evidently figurative; it is an allusion to Jewish sacrifices; and without stopping to inquire a moment further, the unsightly figures are dismissed; when upon examination the fact turns out to be, that the Jewish sacrifices were the figures and shadows, and the atonement of Christ, the real substance.

The apostle to the Hebrews contains a laboured and conclusive argument addressed to Jews, in favour of the priesthood of Christ. In managing this argument, the apostle has anticipated and answered the most material of Jewish objections. The Jews maintained, that the priesthood of Aaron was to continue to the end of the world. The apostle shows from the promise of God to Messiah, "Thou art a priest for ever," etc., that the Aaronical priesthood was to be changed; for he argues, (chapter vii. 11,) "If, therefore, perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" He next argues the necessity of a more perfect priesthood, on two grounds: 1. The imperfections of the priests under the law. They were mortal, and hence the necessity of a succession of them. "And they

truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue, by reason of death." In opposition to these, the Messiah is a priest for ever; and because he continueth ever, he hath an unchangeable priesthood: "Wherefore he is able also to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." The priests under the law were sinful. - "The law maketh them high priests which have infirmity." The high priests under the law needed daily to offer up sacrifice for their own sin. But "Christ is such an high priest as became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, who needeth not daily," etc. 2. The imperfection of the sacrifices: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." They made atonement, as we have seen, for the life; but they could not extend to the conscience. The expiation of Christ, however, removes guilt from the soul of the believer. "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ, once for all." "The blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, shall much more purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God."

The apostle is very particular in showing, in opposition to the Socinians, that Christ is a real, and not a metaphorical high priest. A special designation of God to the office is admitted by the apostle as necessary to a valid discharge of its duties. "And no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." He shows that Christ had this divine call: "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, also said to him, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Nay, further; he proves that Christ was put into office with more awful solemnity than the Jewish high priests. "For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchise-

dec. By so much was Jesus made the surety of a better testament."

As Christ was thus solemnly inaugurated, so he fully discharged the duties of his office. These duties under the law are thus explained: "Every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men, in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." As applied to Christ, the apostle remarks, "Wherefore it is of necessity, that this man have somewhat also to offer. But as it was not possible, that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins; hence when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering," which are offered by the law, "thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." And we are said to be sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all; because this man was not like the Jewish priests, who had to stand daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins; "for after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, he for ever sat down on the right hand of God."

Let us stop a little, and look at the above. (1.) Christ received a more solemn institution into his office, offered a better sacrifice, and made a more perfect atonement for sin, than any priest that ever lived: if therefore he be not literally and really a high priest, there never was a high priest in the world. (2.) The terms priest and sacrifice have not the same meaning, when applied to Christ and to christians. Christians are simply called priests; he is high priest; a term restricted to him exclusively, under the gospel dispensation. Christians are said to offer to God the sacrifices of prayer, praise, and good works; but they are never said to offer a sacrifice for sin, which our Saviour did. The value of the sacrifices of christians consisted in their being frequently repeated. "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." But a single act

of devotion, or a single act of charity will avail nothing; these acts must be performed continually. Now the perfection of Christ's sacrifice consisted in its being offered once for all. "After he had offered one sacrifice for sins, he for ever sat down on the right hand of God." "By one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Because christians in general are called priests, figuratively, it is inferred that Christ is not a priest literally. So the whole Jewish nation is called a kingdom of priests. Therefore the family of Aaron was not specially designated to the office of the priesthood! If christians in general are said to offer sacrifices to God, the same is repeatedly said of the Jews in general. But how did the Jewish people offer sacrifices? By their priests. And how do christians offer sacrifices? "By him," that is, by Christ, "let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually." (3.) The Jewish priests offered sacrifices for sins. "And Jesus Christ offered one sacrifice for sins." By Christ's being a sacrifice for sin, it is impossible the Jews should understand the apostle to mean, that he died to confirm his doctrines which contained promises of forgiveness; because though the Jewish scriptures contained promises of pardon as well as the christian, the Jews never offered sacrifices to prove the divinity of their scriptures, and thus inspire confidence in the promises of mercy; for how, in the name of common sense, could the shedding and sprinkling the blood of an animal furnish any proof of the truth of a religion with which those rites were connected? The apostle would employ terms suitable to convey his meaning to his Jewish readers; and as it was impossible that the Jews should understand his words in a Socinian sense, it is impossible that he should employ them in that sense. The sacrifices which the priests offered for sin, were offered to God. So Christ "gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God." Christ "through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." (Ephes. v. 2; Heb. ix. 14.) When a sacrifice for sin

is presented to God, it is offered with a view to induce him to pardon the sin. Our opponents say, that Christ died to confirm the gospel: but under that view, how could it be said, that he offered himself a sacrifice for sin, to God? He did not surely die to confirm the gospel to God. If Christ sacrificed himself to confirm the gospel, and thus persuade us to forsake our sins and obey it; then, as bishop Stillingfleet observes, (On Christ's Satisfaction, pages 286, 287,) "All the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, in order to expiation, doth wholly and immediately respect us; so that if it be a proper sacrifice to any, it must be a sacrifice to us, and not to God; for a sacrifice is always said to be made to him whom it doth immediately respect: but Christ in the planting faith in actual deliverance, in declaring to us this deliverance, doth wholly respect us; and therefore his sacrifice must be made to men, and not to God; which is in itself a gross absurdity, and repugnant to the nature and design of sacrifices from the first institution of them."

"Every high priest," the apostle remarks, "is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore, it is of necessity, that this man have somewhat also to offer." I suppose the Socinians will allow, that no other high priest ever offered sacrifices to prove the truth of divine revelation; and whatever else was the design of their sacrifices, we cannot argue from it, that it is necessary our high priest, Jesus Christ, should offer a sacrifice for this purpose. The necessity in this case is argued by the apostle from the nature of the office. And if, on this ground, it was necessary Christ should offer a sacrifice to authenticate the word of God, it was equally necessary that antediluvian, patriarchal, and Jewish priests, should have offered sacrifices for the same purpose. No; the design of those sacrifices which the office of the priesthood required priests to offer, is explained in Hebrews v. 1, at large. And as this was an indispensable duty of the office of Christ, as high priest, he had of necessity to present a sacrifice for sins; and thus the quibbles against the atonement are confounded.

To put a Socinian construction upon the priesthood of Christ, is to destroy the whole force of the apostle's reasoning. He is attempting to convert the unbelieving and to confirm the believing Jews, on the ground that the priesthood of Christ, is far superior to that of Aaron. An unbelieving Jew might reply: "Your high priest is only a figure, of which ours is the original; yours is the shadow, ours the substance. Your image of a priest made no expiation for sin, he only shed his blood to confirm his doctrine. Our doctrine has a better confirmation than the blood of a priest could give it; it is confirmed by the miracles of our prophets: our priests do not offer sacrifices to demonstrate the divine authority of the law, but to make atonement for the violations of it. Yours is only a priest in name; and instead of executing the office better than ours do, he does not discharge one duty of it at all." Whatever may be said of the superiority of Christ as a prophet, it is certain that the apostle must have been insane, to have undertaken to demonstrate, upon Socinian principles, the superiority of the priesthood of Christ.

The Aaronical was instituted to expiate sin only, so far as related to the immediate penal consequences of transgression, with respect to the present life. God was at the head of the Jewish state; he was the supreme civil magistrate. Standing in this relation to the nation, the civil penalty of the law was death; but in most cases, an animal sacrifice was accepted in the stead of the offender, and his life was preserved. So that the Jewish sacrifices only exempted men from bodily punishment as to the present life; they could not purify the soul from guilt, nor save from the punishment of sin in the life to come. With respect to the punishment of sin in this life, committed against God as the civil magistrate, the animal sacrifices had a real efficacy in removing it; for in the frequent directions in the law to offer sacrifices for sin, there are promises to the offender, that "his sin shall be forgiven him." When, therefore, the apostle so often declares, that the

Jewish sacrifices could not take away sin, we are to take his explanation, that they could not purge the worshippers, so that they should have no more conscience of sin. On the other hand, the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, does purge the conscience from the guilt of dead works. For Christ by his own blood entered at once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. What, therefore, the Jewish atonements did for the body in time, that the atonement of Christ does for the soul in eternity.

But besides making atonement for political offences, the Aaronical priesthood was a figurative representation of the priesthood of Christ. The high priest under the law was a type of Christ; the holy place in the temple was a type of heaven; the blood of animals typified the blood of Christ; and the high priest going into the holy of holies with the blood of victims, typified Christ going into the true holy place, into heaven itself, with his own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us. This subject may be seen treated at large in chapters viii., ix., and x. of the epistle to the Hebrews.

It is commonly objected, that the old testament nowhere explains the Aaronical priesthood to be a figurative representation of the priesthood of Christ; and that the Jews are never directed to look through the type to the antitype, for pardon and eternal salvation. But this is not true. Psalm cx. 4, is a pretty clear intimation, according to the apostle, that the old priesthood was to be changed, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; and that a better, under the Messiah, would be substituted in its place. From Jeremiah xxxi. 33, he shows, that a new and more spiritual dispensation would take place of the old; and by a comparison of the texts, infers, that the new priest (the Messiah) would officiate under the new covenant dispensation. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." He argues likewise from Psalm lx. 6—8, that the sacrifices under the law could not remove guilt from the conscience,

and that the first priesthood was to be taken away, and the second established, to accomplish this great object. He also insists largely from the nature of the Aaronical priesthood, that a fair conclusion might be drawn, in proof of its being a temporary and typical institution. This part of his argument embraces three points: 1. The sinfulness of the priests. "For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity." 2. The little value of the sacrifices, being only animal. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." 3. The frequent repetition of the sacrifices. "For the law can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then, would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices, there is a remembrance made of sins again every year. Now where the remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."

The apostle does not pretend, nor do we, that on the above grounds the Jews could attain to a perfect knowledge of the priesthood of Christ; but they certainly show, with sufficient clearness, that the old priesthood and law were introductory to, and typical of the perfect priesthood of the Messiah. "The law contained a shadow only of the good things to come, and not the very image of those things." They knew that the law contained only a shadow of the priesthood of Messiah; but as it was not the very image, but only a faint representation, they could not collect from it very correct ideas of the original.

But besides what is urged by the apostle in this discourse on the priesthood of Christ, much more evidence is to be found in the old testament on this subject. Both David and Zechariah speak of the sufferings of Messiah; and Daniel and Isaiah explain the reason and design of his sufferings. According to the latter, the cutting off of Messiah, is to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make recon-

ciliation for iniquity. The word here rendered reconciliation, is *copher*, the same word which is usually employed to denote the object of Jewish sacrifices, and is generally rendered, atonement. Isaiah liii. will be more closely examined by and by. At present, I shall only observe, that he is there called a sin offering, and is said to bear iniquity, and to bear sin. (Verses 10—12.) As these words are frequently used in relation to Jewish priests and sacrifices, no Jew could be ignorant of their meaning; nor could he have avoided applying them in these verses to the vicarious nature of Messiah's sufferings, if his mind were not biased by prejudice.

Now though this evidence did not appear so clear before the coming of Christ, as it has done since, seeing the antitype must cast light upon the type, just as the event illustrates the prediction; yet these prophecies and typical representations, in the absence of full daylight, would serve, like the star which conducted the eastern magi, to direct the faith and hope of pious Jews to the Saviour of the world. Immortality was not brought fully to light, till the Sun of Righteousness arose; but still so much was revealed upon the subject, as to encourage many a patriarchal and Jewish saint to die in the confidence of future and eternal blessedness.

It is objected again, that if Jewish sacrifices were typical of the priesthood of Christ, they ought to have been offered for every sin which is pardonable under the gospel, such as murder, adultery, etc. Those who maintain, that the Jewish sacrifices were merely figurative, and availed nothing of themselves to the removal of sin, will find it difficult to answer this objection. I have shown, however, that they really expiated political offences, and were primarily instituted for that purpose; but at the same time, they served as figurative representations of the atonement of Christ. That which has no virtue in itself, cannot be a figurative representation of the superior virtue of anything else. It is essential to a type, that it bear some analogy

and proportion to the antitype. Thus the brazen serpent, is represented (John iii. 14, 15) as a type of Christ. By looking to it, with faith in the proclamation, the Israelites who were bitten by the fiery flying serpents, were saved from temporal death, just as the christian, who, being liable to perish forever through sin, by looking with an eye of faith to Jesus lifted up on the cross, is saved from eternal death. But if the Israelites had not obtained a cure of the bite of the real serpents, by looking to the brazen serpent, the brazen serpent could not have been a type of our eternal salvation by Christ. To have offered animal sacrifices for murder, adultery, and other offences against the civil government, for which they could make no civil expiation, could not have answered the purpose of a type; for in cases where they failed to procure a lesser benefit, they could not figuratively represent another sacrifice, which was to procure a greater benefit. It was only in the instances in which they really expiated political offences, for which they were instituted, that they were or could be types of Christ. The extent of the priesthood of Christ, as to the persons interested in it, is a point of some importance. He is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." "He gave himself a ransom for all." The Father "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." "The grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared." (Marginal reading.) "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." There is no room for a quibble upon the word all, in these texts. I admit, that it is sometimes taken in a limited sense, when applied to other subjects; but that all, which includes the whole world, and every man, cannot exclude a part of that world, or a single man.

The death of Christ was retrospective in its effects, as well as prospective. "We thus judge, that if one

died for all, then were all dead." Here the apostle infers universal depravity, from universal redemption. The text proves the remedy to be as broad as the disease; and as men were dead in sin before the coming of Christ, the same as they have been since, the means of salvation were afforded them in his name, on the credit of his great undertaking; just as a man of property and credit may purchase anything for his poor neighbours, and be allowed to grant them possession, before he has actually paid the purchase money. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them," etc. Hebrews xi. 13, and Romans v. 18, 19, are quite decisive on the point, that the redemption of Christ extended backward to the time of Adam, as well as forward, to the end of the world. So Hebrews ix. 15, affords the clearest proof, that the death of Christ was an expiation for sins which were committed previously to his coming. "And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Here the apostle alludes to the custom of men, on making a new covenant, to make satisfaction for any violations of the old one. Now according to the apostle, there were transgressions under the old covenant, for which no price of redemption had been actually paid in behalf of these transgressors. These transgressions the apostle has explained to be, the violations of the law, as they affected the conscience. And as the new covenant could not take effect, without satisfaction being made for the violations of the old; therefore, Christ by his death expiated the sins committed under the old covenant, that those who entered into the new, might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

The same sentiment is contained in Hebrews ix. 25, 26, at large. The design of Christ's death, according to the apostle, was to put away, or expiate sin, by his

blood ; and if one offering of himself had not been sufficient for that purpose, then he must often have suffered since the foundation of the world ; but this consequence would not follow on any other supposition, than that the intention of the death of Christ was to expiate the sins committed from the foundation of the world to the time of his suffering, as well as those committed since.

This view of the subject cuts up the Socinian hypothesis, root and branch. The death of Christ, say they, was not a proper sacrifice for sin, but merely a confirmation of the gospel, which gospel was to persuade men to put away their sins. If this were true, the death of Christ could have no effect with respect to sins committed previous to the gospel. His death could not have removed the condemnation, which all men were under in consequence of the offence of Adam, for at least four thousand years. If his death only removed sin by accrediting a divine revelation, which promised pardon on repentance, it would have been absolutely necessary, in order to make redemption for the transgressions committed under the Mosaic covenant, that he should have died as soon as that covenant was made, for the purpose of confirming it. The apostle argues, that if Christ's dying once had not been sufficient, he must often have suffered since the foundation of the world. But if the object of his suffering were nothing more than a confirmation of the gospel, and that object could not have been secured by his suffering once, instead of suffering often since the foundation of the world, it would have been necessary for him to have suffered often since the publication of the gospel. The sacrifices under the law were offered often, (annually,) because they could not accomplish their object by being offered once ; and had this been the case with our Lord, he ought, on the Socinian hypothesis, to have suffered annually under the gospel, and not annually from the foundation of the world, to the period of the gospel dispensation ; for how could his dying every year, for thousands of years before

the gospel was known, be any proof of its truth? The gospel account extends the death of Christ backward to the offence of Adam, as well as forward to the end of time; the Socinian account of it, extends it forward only.

The sacred writers certainly wished to be understood. They could not but know, that their words would be taken in their usual acceptation when no intimation to the contrary was given; and, therefore, we may justly infer, that that is the sense they intended to convey. The same terms which are universally in the Bible applied to Jewish priests and sacrifices, are applied to Christ. A Socinian, I think, will not have the hardihood to say, that the Jews offered their sacrifices to demonstrate the divinity of the law of Moses; it is, therefore, impossible, that such a thought should ever enter the head of a Jewish convert to christianity, that the sacrifice of Christ was offered in attestation of the divinity of the christian religion, unless the intention of his death to that effect were clearly explained. Now where is this explanation to be found? I feel no hesitation to say, in no part of the Bible. The everlasting repetition of Christ's dying to confirm the gospel, is nowhere to be found in the gospel. It is a bold, audacious effort, to rob the gospel of its principal glory, because it stands opposed to the pride and self-sufficiency of the carnal mind.

Most of the Socinians are universalists, and suppose that Christ will restore all that perished before the gospel. If we were to grant this, it would still be impossible to show, that the death of Christ will have any influence upon their restoration. (1.) These were not inhabitants of this world at the time of Christ's death. The sufferings of our Lord, therefore, can be no confirmation of the gospel to them. The sufferings of Christ will want confirmation to them, and the evidence necessary to confirm that fact, would serve equally well to confirm all the other parts contained in the gospel history. The gospel must be confirmed to them in some other way, before it can be confirmed by the blood

of Christ ; but when the first confirmation has taken place, the second is unnecessary. (2.) Supposing the restoration to take place, it cannot be the effect of practising the virtue of the gospel ; and, therefore, upon Socinian principles, the death of Christ can contribute nothing towards it. The hell from which the damned, it is supposed, will be restored, cannot afford opportunities of obeying the precepts of the gospel, because those precepts are founded upon the relations and circumstances of the present life. The gospel recognizes the relations of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, sovereign and subject, pastor and flock ; it recognizes the circumstances of riches, poverty, agriculture, merchandize, and mortality, with its train of diseases, etc. Now if these relations and circumstances can have no existence in hell, and no one in his senses supposes they can, then the precepts of the gospel which relate to them, cannot be practised in hell ; and, consequently, the death of Christ could not be intended to confirm the morality of the gospel to those who suffer future punishment. This favourite notion of a universal restoration I have refuted in another work, to which I refer the reader. (3.) Those who lived and died virtuous characters previous to the coming of Christ, it is presumed, will not be put again into a probationary state ; and, therefore, Christ could not die to confirm the gospel to them, and thus persuade them to forsake their sins and discharge their duties. In short, this sentiment, that Christ died for the sins of the whole world, including those who lived prior to gospel times, completely refutes the Socinian account of his death ; I am, therefore, surprised, that writers on the scripture doctrine of atonement have not taken more notice of it.

As Christ is the only sacrifice for sin that ever could relieve the conscience from a sense of guilt, it is a matter of vast importance to keep this subject alive in the minds of the pious in all ages. Hence the first promise made to guilty man, had an undoubted reference to it ; that the seed of the woman should bruise

the serpent's head. His atonement was the frequent subject of prophecy, and it was typically represented by animal sacrifices under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations. The patriarchs and Jews had no idea of the modern doctrine, that good works would atone for bad ones : they knew that without shedding of blood there was no remission.

To keep this important subject alive in the minds of christians, our Lord instituted the holy eucharist. "Do this in remembrance of me." "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, till he come." "His blood was shed for many, for the remission of sins." This ordinance was not appointed merely to refresh our memories with respect to the fact of his death ; but to impress upon our minds the benefits resulting from it. The bread represents his body, and the wine his blood. By these sacred emblems the sacrifice of Christ is figuratively shown, or exhibited. This institution impresses the subject of the atonement upon our senses, and thus keeps alive our faith in the vicarious nature of his death ; and is to do it, as the apostle teaches, "till he come," that is, to judgment. Thus the death of Christ, which obtained for the pious in all ages, the remission of sins and eternal redemption, was typified by animal sacrifices from Adam to the period of his death, and is figuratively represented under the gospel by the Lord's supper, which institution is to continue in force to the end of time. The Socinians, by celebrating the eucharist merely as a memorial, the same as celebrating the anniversary of the death of any celebrated man, do not discern the Lord's body as figuratively represented by the bread and wine, and thus eat and drink judgment to themselves. (1 Cor. xi. 29.)

SECTION VI.

THE EXTREMITY OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS A
PROOF OF THEIR VICARIOUS NATURE.

THE argument drawn from the extreme sufferings of Christ, in proof that they were vicarious, has generally been allowed to be one of considerable weight. "His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." "He was sore amazed." "He feared." "His sweat was, as it had been, great drops of blood, falling down on the ground." He exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" etc.

Our rational christians are very much puzzled to give a rational account of our Lord's sufferings. If Christ were neither a sinner, nor a sacrifice for sin, on what principles can we explain his terrors? God has promised to be with his people in trouble, and to support and comfort them under it. Christ complained that God had forsaken him. When good men have been cast down and distressed in their minds under sufferings, they have uniformly ascribed it to a keen sensibility of their sins and unfaithfulness, which hath caused them to dread the displeasure of God; and not to the severity of their bodily pain. But Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled; he knew no sin. He, therefore, had nothing of that sort to reproach himself with; and it is inconsistent with the dignity of such exalted virtue as our Saviour's, to suppose that his terror was occasioned by the fear of man. Many a saint has exulted under the most excruciating tortures. "I will not fear what man can do unto me," said the pious psalmist. (Psalm xxvii. 1.) Our Lord inculcated on his disciples, "Fear not him that can kill the body, and after that, hath no more that he can do." And is it credible that he should be the first to violate his own precept? The martyrs have met death in his most frightful and terrific forms, undismayed. Instead of offering up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears to him that

was able to save them from death, instead of praying, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from us;" they have cried, "Welcome death!" "Come, Lord Jesus, and come quickly!" In the daily expectation of being thrown to the wild beasts, St. Paul declared, "I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." And, instead of complaining under the greatest torments that fiery bigots could inflict, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—many a holy sufferer has exclaimed in raptures, My God, my God, thou art with me! though my heart and my flesh fail me, thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever! The contrast is striking. In the prospect of suffering, and under it, martyrs have exulted and triumphed; whereas Christ was nearly dead with the fear of death; and his Father stood aloof from him while he drank the bitter cup. Upon Socinian principles, this is utterly inexplicable: the atonement, and the atonement only, solves the difficulty. "He bore our sins, and carried our sorrows." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him." etc.

The great plea urged by those who deny the atonement is, that it was necessary Christ should die to confirm the doctrines he taught. To this we reply, (1.) The mere circumstance of dying in support of doctrines is no proof of their truth. Mahomedanism, heathenism, popery, and almost every heresy, has produced its martyrs; if, therefore, the deaths of partizans establish the divinity of their respective creeds, all religions are upon a level. No christian can believe this. When a person dies in support of a doctrine, he gives very strong evidence of his conviction of its truth; but it still remains possible, that he may be mistaken; and, in point of fact, we know that many of these martyrs were mistaken, because they died in defence of doctrines directly opposed to each other. Infidels might well triumph over christianity, if its advocates had no-

thing better to urge in support of its authority and obligation than the death of its founder. (2.) The circumstances of the death of Christ, if he were not a sacrifice for sin, would afford a strong presumption against the divinity of his doctrine. When a man dies to confirm the truth of his testimony, we naturally expect that his conscience will support him under his sufferings, and we rather look for a display of heroism. If he appear fearful and timid, turn pale, tremble, sweat, agonize, and complain of divine desertion, our jealousy is excited that he was an imposter; and if afterwards he should endeavour to recover a measure of fortitude, yet we should rather be disposed to account for it by supposing, that though his principles could not support him, yet the dread of shame and exposure, and a desire to support his character, had prompted him to suppress his fears, and to assume the appearance of confidence and self possession. Look at our Lord fearing, crying, sore amazed, sweating blood, complaining that God had forsaken him, and say whether you would expect all this from a man who is dying to persuade the world that his doctrine is divine. We justly object to infidel principles, that their advocates are seldom preserved from the terrors of a death bed.

But the death of Christ, it is said, was a necessary preliminary to his resurrection; and his resurrection affords the strongest proof of the divinity of his mission. We readily grant that the resurrection of Christ affords very strong evidence in favour of our holy religion; but we deny that it was the strongest attestation of it, or that it was a necessary attestation of it. Our Lord himself supposed that the law was sufficiently authenticated without one rising from the dead; and that such a miracle would not afford stronger evidence than the characters of divinity which appear on the face of the sacred pages. "He said, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

Our Saviour prayed to his Father, If it be possible, let this cup of death pass from me. When we con-

sider what he said on another occasion, that his Father always heard him, that he was beloved of his Father, etc., we may fairly infer, that if it had been possible to accomplish human redemption without putting this cup into his hand, he would have been saved the pain of dying. We have seen, that when the internal evidence of scripture would fail to produce conviction, a resurrection would not succeed, and that the word of God would be sufficiently authenticated without it. As, therefore, Jesus Christ did really die and rise again, we must look for some other end to be served by them; and these we learn were, "He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification."

Socinian ingenuity has compared the gospel to a deed, and the death of Christ to a seal; on which it is argued, that as a seal is necessary to establish the validity of a deed, so the death of Christ to establish the validity of the gospel. But, (1.) If this sentiment were admitted, it would carry us too far; for it would equally prove, that no prophet could authenticate any divine communication, which he might be commissioned to make, without sealing it with his blood. Instead of Moses attesting the divinity of his institutions by his blood, death was inflicted on him as a punishment for his sin. "Get thee up into this mountain and die, because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel, at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, and because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel." (Deut. xxxii. 49—51.) Enoch, who was the greatest antediluvian prophet, and Elijah, who, next to Moses, was the greatest prophet under the law, were so far from sealing their doctrines with their blood, that they did not die at all. Yet surely we are not to conclude, that what they taught was of no more authority than an unsealed deed:

(2.) If the death of a teacher were necessary to attest the truth of his doctrine, then his hearers are justified in paying no regard to him as long as he liveth. If the doctrines of Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, were of no more authority and value during

their life, than an unsealed deed, the people ought not to have believed in them, or paid them any respect till after their death. This supposes that the characters of divinity which their doctrine might bear, and the miracles by which they might be supported, are of no value or importance whatever ; for of what worth or consequence is an unsealed deed ?

(3.) It is presumed the Socinians do not hold, that death under any circumstances is sufficient to authenticate a religious system, because false prophets die as well as true ; and, therefore, upon this plan, all religions would be equally true. By dying, therefore, to attest the truth of doctrines, our opponents must mean a particular kind of death, namely, that of martyrdom. But if martyrdom were necessary to prove the truth of doctrines, what must we think of the three greatest prophets that preceded Christ,—Enoch, Moses, and Elijah ? for none of them suffered martyrdom.

A martyr is a murdered person ; and if the blood of a martyr be necessary to seal the truth of God, and to establish its validity ; then murder, and murder of the most atrocious kind, is necessary to authenticate divine revelation. This seems to be an odd kind of rational religion ! Before Socinians object again to us, that our scheme renders the murder of an innocent person necessary, in order to atone for sin, it is to be hoped, for the sake of consistency and decency, that they will take care to have this great difficulty, which lies as an incubus on their system, perfectly obviated. Their creed, as well as ours, renders the death of Christ necessary ; but their creed requires one particular kind of death, that of martyrdom, which includes murder ; ours does not : Jesus Christ was priest as well as victim : “ He gave himself for us.” It was not necessary for wicked men to put him to death, in order that he might atone for the sins of the world. They were not the priests to present the sacrifice. To have died under almost any other circumstances, might have served equally well, as far as we can judge, to give him an opportunity of presenting himself to God. As, however, his death was

necessary to his becoming a sacrifice for sin, it was no more necessary to work a miracle to prevent his crucifixion, than it is to work a miracle to prevent any other murder. Christ might avail himself of these circumstances as well as those of any other, to offer himself up to God as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. On our system, therefore, murder was not necessary; it was only permitted, as it is in every other case. But according to our opponents, the murder was necessary; for if the gospel would have had no more validity, without the death of Christ, than a deed without a seal; if his death, under any other circumstances than those of martyrdom, would have been no attestation of the truth of the gospel; and if no man has a right to put another to death for preaching the truth; then he who puts a divine teacher to death is guilty of murder, and that murder is as necessary to establish the validity of the gospel, as a seal is to establish the validity of a deed.

The only text of scripture which to my knowledge has been urged to prove that the death of Christ was necessary to attest the truth of the gospel, is Hebrews ix. 16, 17, at large. It is true enough that a testament cannot be acted upon until the testator is dead; but something more is necessary to establish the validity of a testament than the death of the testator, or our gentlemen of the long robe would lose much of their business. How many thousands of wills are proved to be good for nothing after the decease of those who made them! If the *diatheke* in this passage means testament, as it is translated, the argument of the apostle is, that the death of Christ is as necessary to our enjoying the blessings promised in the gospel, as the death of a testator is to a legatee, entering on the enjoyment of an estate devised to him by will. This we readily grant. Pardon and salvation are promised through the blood of Christ; and in the preceding verses the apostle shows that our redemption was actually accomplished through his blood. (See verses 11 — 14, at large.) Here he contrasts the Jewish sa-

crifices with Christ's, and shows that what they did figuratively and ritually, Christ's did really and spiritually. For the Socinians, therefore, to pretend that Christ redeemed us by his blood, because he confirmed by his blood those precepts, by obeying which we shall be saved, is as silly as to affirm that the Jews were figuratively and ritually purified by the blood of sacrifices, because shedding the blood of beasts proved the divinity of the Mosaic precepts, by obeying which they enjoyed those privileges which that institution contained. On Socinian principles, the death of Christ could not be as necessary to our enjoying the benefits of the gospel, as the death of a testator is in order that a legatee may receive a legacy; unless we suppose that miracles, the fulfilment of prophecies, and internal characters of divinity, do not furnish sufficient evidence to warrant the belief and practice of christianity.

But the word *diatheke* no doubt denotes covenant, in this passage, as well as in most others. Dr. Macknight translates the verses thus: when the covenant was between man and man, the necessity of a sacrifice was derived from custom. Both Jews and Gentiles performed their solemn acts of religion by sacrifice. In making a covenant, they found it necessary to engage God to be a party to it. By the customary rites of devotion, they appealed to him that they sincerely approved and accepted of the stipulations of the covenant, and earnestly besought him to take signal vengeance of the party who should violate them. The sacrifice was not offered to prove that the covenant was genuine, and its provisions founded in truth and equity; for the parties were satisfied on these points before the sacrifice was brought in; but to engage the parties themselves to be true to its stipulations.

In the case of a covenant between God and man, God is said to make the covenant, and man to accept it. The sacrifice was not necessary to prove that the covenant was a genuine production of the Almighty, and its stipulations all true, just, and merciful; for the blood of animals could not possibly furnish any evidence

upon these points; but to make atonement for the sins of the people, that they might be proper recipients of the benefits of the covenant. Thus the apostle goes on to argue, that the first covenant was dedicated with blood; and as the touch of a sinner was supposed to defile, their sacred places and things were sprinkled with blood, as well as the people; because, he adds, "without shedding of blood, there is no remission." (Verses 18, 22.) He then goes on to show that the gospel covenant required a better sacrifice than the Mosaic; that Christ is that better sacrifice, and that "he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" "he was once offered, to bear the sins of many." (Verses 23, 28.)

I have spent the more time upon this argument of dying in confirmation of the truth of the gospel, because of the uncommon stress which is laid upon it. You can scarcely read a Socinian publication, but when the writer comes to treat on the death of Christ, you have it over and over, till you are nearly surfeited, that he died to confirm the gospel; he sealed the truth with his blood, etc. The blood of animals bore the same relation to the Mosaic dispensation that the blood of Christ does to the gospel. Did it ever enter into any man's head that the blood of a beast confirmed the divinity and sealed the truth of the law of Moses? The blood of Christ was not shed to confirm the truth of the christian religion; that was done by miracles: "The Lord working with them," the apostles, "and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark xvi. 20.) His blood was not shed to seal the truth; it is the blood of the new covenant, shed for many, for the remission of sins. (Matt. xxvi. 28.)

It is maintained that Christ died to set us an example of patience under suffering. The two texts urged in support of this sentiment are the following: 1 Peter ii. 20—24; iii. 17, 18. Here Christ is represented as an example to christians under sufferings, as to the temper of mind in which they ought to be endured. Christ suffered patiently, without reviling or threatening;

and they ought to do the same. But the cause of Christ's suffering was not to set us an example of patience ; nor was it the same as in the saints. He died for sins ; and let this phrase mean what it will besides, it cannot mean that he died to set us an example. The saints suffered for righteousness' sake : Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. " Who, his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." We nowhere read of a saint, that he suffered for the sins of the unjust, to bring us to God ; and that he bare our sins in his own body. The apostle's argument is this, if Christ patiently suffered for us, by bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, that we might be brought to God and saved, ought not we patiently to suffer in working out our own salvation ? He knew no sin, and therefore deserved no suffering. Ye were sinners, as sheep going astray, and consequently deserved to suffer. His sufferings were disinterested, he suffered for others ; yours are interested, you suffer for yourselves. He suffered for your sins, and by his stripes you are healed ; you ought therefore to suffer in his cause, who has accomplished your redemption.

Had his sufferings been merely of human infliction, to set an example of patient endurance to the saints, it was only necessary to state what he suffered from the unjust, and not what he suffered for them ; but then the argument would have lost the greater part of its force ; because what he suffered from them bore no proportion to what he suffered for them. In order to render one person's sufferings exemplary to another, it is not necessary that the sufferings of both should originate in the same cause. One who is burned to death by a slow fire, without uttering a single complaint or murmur, is an example of patient suffering to another who is afflicted with the gout or tooth ach. To render sufferings exemplary, it is not necessary that they should be the same in their cause or kind. The great points are, their quantum, and the temper of mind with which they are borne. He who suffers with patience is a proper example to all whose sufferings are less than his

in degree; and the weight of his example will increase exactly in proportion as the degree of his sufferings exceeds theirs. Now as our Saviour suffered much more for men than he suffered from them; and as the weight of his example depended upon the quantum of his sufferings, it was quite natural that the apostle should lay the principal stress upon the vicarious nature of his sufferings. It is this consideration which makes his example of almost infinitely more value upon our system than upon that of our opponents.

The vicarious nature of the sufferings of Christ is clearly and strongly expressed in these two texts. The first shall be considered more particularly by and by. It is enough to remark here, that his own self, and his own body, cannot mean the gospel; that his bearing our sins, cannot mean our putting them away; and that the tree on which Christ bore our sins cannot mean the place where the sinner is converted. This however is the substance of the Socinian interpretation. We are told that Christ by his death confirmed the gospel, and by his gospel converts men and persuades them to put away their sins.

The other text is remarkably decisive. There is no room for Socinian quibble, as to the sense in which Christ died for sins, because it is immediately added, "The just for the unjust." The doctrine of substitution could not well be more strongly expressed. If it were said that A. suffered for murder, the innocent for the guilty, could common sense be made of such language on any other supposition than that A. suffered the punishment of the crime of murder, and that he suffered in the stead of the guilty? You might say in this case, that the innocent suffered for the benefit of the guilty. But how? Certainly by suffering instead of the guilty, the punishment which his crimes had deserved. Had the apostle said merely that Christ died for the unjust, without mentioning their sins as the cause, there would have been some room for the remark, that he died for their benefit, but not in their stead; but when in dying for them, he died for their sins, the doctrine of substi-

tution is clearly understood. I might die for another man, without supposing his life to be forfeited: "For a good man, some would even dare to die;" but if I die for his sins also, the case is altered; it is then supposed that his life is forfeited by sin, and that I suffer the punishment of his sin in his stead.

In Hebrews ii. 10, and v. 8, our Lord is said to have been made perfect through suffering. From these scriptures the Socinians infer that his sufferings were necessary to complete his moral character. Surely such an inference requires support. If suffering be necessary to perfect moral character, then, since God never suffered, he cannot be a perfectly moral being. If it be said that the argument is intended to apply to creatures only, I answer, if there were any solidity in it, it would apply to God also. But are not angels creatures? And are they less perfect in virtue than men, because they do not suffer? If so, the Lord's prayer should be reversed; and instead of saying, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;" it ought to be, "Thy will be done in heaven, as it is in earth." In the nature of things, suffering could be no more necessary to perfect the moral character of Christ, than to perfect the moral character of angels and of God.

Socinians suppose it was necessary to the perfection of Christ's character that he should exemplify all his precepts. But if it were necessary that a divine teacher should exemplify his doctrine, the greater part of the word of God is destitute of authority. Nearly the whole of revelation, prior to the law, was delivered not through the medium of prophets, but directly by the Almighty, or through the ministry of angels. From the law to the coming of Christ, there was not a prophet who exemplified all his precepts. The prophets had frequent messages to sovereigns; but they were not made kings, to show kings how to discharge their important duties. They declaimed loudly against lying and cheating in trade; but no one ever thought that it was necessary to give authority to their doctrine that they should become tradesmen. John the Baptist taught

soldiers their duty, without becoming a soldier himself. Jesus Christ by his apostle Paul taught husbands, wives, and children, their duties ; but neither the master nor his servant were married, nor had children, much less exchanged their sex, to exemplify their precepts.

If then you should require in what sense Christ was made perfect through suffering ; I refer you to the context of the passages for an explanation. The first is Heb. ii. 10. Here the word *archegon* rendered captain, is in chapter xii. 2, translated author ; and as I should think for the better. Read on, and you will find that the apostle quotes texts from the old testament to prove that Christ was to partake of human nature ; and in the two last verses of the chapter, he assigns the reason why he should do so. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest," etc.

Here, you perceive, that his sufferings were not necessary to perfect his moral, but his priestly character. "That he might be a merciful and faithful high priest."

(1.) To make reconciliation for the sins of the people. The epistle is addressed to Jews. How did the Jewish high priests make reconciliation for sin ? By presenting a sin offering to God. Christ had to present himself a sin offering to God ; (Heb. ix. 26—28 ;) animal sacrifices being incapable of removing the guilt of sin from the conscience. (Heb. x. 2.) Hence the necessity of his suffering in order to the perfection of his priesthood. (2.) To sympathise with his people in trouble, and "know how to succour them that are tempted." This was a part of the high priest's office under the law.

(Heb. v. 1, 2.)

The other text, Heb. v. 8, 9, has the most undoubted reference to the priestly character of Christ. The first four verses of the chapter show how high priests were constituted under the law. The apostle proceeds to state, that Christ was made high priest by the same authority, verses 5—10. After a digression, which runs through the latter part of the fifth and the greater part of the sixth chapter, the apostle resumes the subject of

the priesthood, and argues the necessity of a change in it from the imperfection of the Aaronical and the perfection of that of Christ. "If therefore perfection were by the levitical priesthood, what further need was there that another priest should rise?" etc. "For, there is verily a disanulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son who is perfected, (see marginal reading,) priest for ever more. For by one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Heb. vii. 11, 18, 19, 28, and Heb. x. 14.)

Socinians say much on the death of Christ being a manifestation of the love of God to sinners; but surely nothing can be more preposterous. When arguing against us, they contend vehemently, that the sufferings of Christ were occasioned solely by the Jews; and that God was no more concerned in the death of Christ, than in the murder of any other person. It has generally been considered quite enough to reconcile the murder of good men by the wicked, with the goodness of the moral Governor of the world. It was reserved for the sagacity of rational christians to discover, that the most shocking and awful murder ever committed was a manifestation of the love of God. When a tyrant has been cut off by his oppressed subjects, the success of their enterprize has sometimes been attributed to providential interference, and has been considered as an evidence of the tender regard of the Almighty for the liberties of mankind. On this principle the Jews celebrated the assassination of tyrants in songs of praise to the Deity. See Judges, in the case of Deborah, and Ehud. But Socinians have the exclusive honour of contending, that when the wicked are embruoung their hands in the blood of the innocent, they are exhibiting to the world the most astonishing display of the benevolence of Deity!

The scriptures represent the death of Christ as the effect of the love of God to man. The Socinians there-

fore are obliged to admit the fact ; but it is impossible to reconcile this fact with their system. On our system Christ suffered the penalty of the law in our stead ; and God in giving his Son for this purpose, manifested his love to us. We do not pretend to perceive the love of God to us in the Jews putting Christ to death ; but in God's delivering him up for us all, and laying on him our iniquities. According to the system we are opposing, what had God to do with the death of Christ, that it must be looked upon as a proof of his love to us ? They say Christ died a martyr to truth. Very well ; and there have been thousands of such martyrs. But in the name of common sense, I ask, are we to look on the murder of good men as evidences of God's love to his creatures ? They tell us again that Christ confirmed the truth of his gospel by his blood ; and as the gospel displays the love of God to us, his death demonstrates the love of God to us. To this I reply, that his death no more proves the truth of his gospel, than the death of a Mahomedan demonstrates the divinity of the Koran. And, in fact, the death of Christ is never represented in scripture as an evidence of the divinity of his mission.

Having shown that those reasons for the death of Christ, which are advocated by Socinians, have no solidity at all in them, particularly when connected with the circumstances of his death ; the way is prepared for what I consider the main argument of this chapter. Death is the wages of sin : Christ knew no sin : as therefore Christ actually died, he must have suffered the punishment of death for the sins of others, or it would not be true, that death is the wages of sin. Let us dwell a little on these points.

The very first time that death is mentioned in scripture, it is mentioned as the penalty annexed to transgression. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." No other cause of death is assigned but sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "Sin hath reigned unto death."

The apostle anticipates and answers a Socinian objection taken from the death of infants and idiots, who never committed actual sin. "Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Adam committed actual sin; they did not; but still they are called sinners, because from him they derived a sinful nature; and, on that account, are subject to death. "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners." "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." And it is certain that this sentence of condemnation means death, because it stands opposed to life, for which we are indebted unto Christ. "Even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." See the fifth chapter to the Romans. No one can doubt that the many, in verse 19, means the all men, in verse 18. Of course, both infants and idiots are included. The apostle, having stated in the former verse that the sentence of condemnation had come upon all men, explains it in the latter by saying that they were made sinners.

The last refuge of our opponents is, that beasts are not sinners, either by nature or by practice, and yet they are subject to death. Wonderful! the death of men cannot be the wages of sin, because the death of beasts is not the wages of sin! Death cannot pass upon all men, in consequence of all men being sinners, because death passeth upon all beasts, and all beasts are not sinners! Where is our rational religion leading us to? Are men and beasts possessed of the same nature, placed under the same divine economy, and to be dealt with exactly in the same manner? To say that sin cannot be the cause of death to man, because it is not to an animal, is just as rational as to say, that remaining under water would not be fatal to man, because it is not to fishes; and that a man might very safely throw himself off a church spire, because a jackdaw can do this without sustaining any injury.

It is not as a punishment for sin, that an ox eateth grass, and that birds have feathers and claws; but surely

a Socinian will not deny that Nebuchadnezzar was punished for his pride and wickedness, when "he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen; and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws."

Jesus Christ was entirely free from sin, both inherent and actual; he was neither depraved, nor guilty. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners: he was without blemish, and without spot. (1 Peter i. 19, and ii. 22.) He was emphatically the just one. *

It necessarily follows, that since death is the punishment of sin, and Christ was entirely free from sin, he suffered the punishment of death for the sins of others. If death be, as the apostle teaches, the sentence of condemnation for sin, Christ must have been either a sinner or a sacrifice for sin; and as we cannot admit the former, we must the latter.

As a sinless being, our Saviour was not naturally subject to death; and men could no more deprive him of life than they could an angel. The Socinians talk about the Jews putting Christ to death, as though he were a poor sinful mortal like themselves; but this is not true. "He gave himself for us." "He laid down his life for us." And many similar expressions are explained by himself. "I lay down my life for the sheep." "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment," or this commission, "have I received of my Father." It is rather singular to hear people talk of the Jews depriving Christ of life, after such a solemn declaration as this, that no man either did or could take away his life, but that he voluntarily laid it down of himself.

At the time of our Saviour's death we read that he, *apheke to pneuma*, "yielded up the ghost," or, as Wesley and Doddridge render it, "he dismissed his spirit."

An equivolent expression occurs in John xix. 30, *paredoke to pneuma*, he yielded, or delivered up his spirit. Dr. Clarke observes, that "in no case, either by the Septuagint in the Old, or any of the sacred writers in the New Testament, is *apheke to pneuma*, or *paredoke to pneuma*, he dismissed his spirit, or delivered up his spirit, spoken of any person but Christ." A suicide may dismiss his own spirit by doing an act of violence on his body; and a murderer dismisses the spirit of the murdered man, by violence done to his body; but Christ did what no other man was ever able to do; he dismissed his spirit by a mere volition of the will. Had the spirit of our Saviour left the body merely in consequence of the bodily violence he suffered from his enemies, in that case they dismissed his spirit, and not he himself. Stephen was stoned, and he committed his spirit into the hands of his Redeemer; but it is neither said of him, nor of any other martyr, that he dismissed his spirit.

It is a very puzzling circumstance to the Socinians, that our Saviour expired so soon after he was nailed to the cross. When the soldiers came to dispatch the convicts, they found, to their surprize, that Jesus was already dead. This was the more remarkable, because the two who were crucified with him were still alive; and because it was usual for persons who were crucified to survive, at least a few days. They try to explain it by supposing that Jesus suffered so much in his mind from the rude treatment he had met with, and from the ignominious nature of the death to which he was adjudged, that he sunk under the accumulated wrongs, and exhausted nature expired. This is paying but a poor compliment to his fortitude, and is contradicted by the apostle; who, instead of representing him like the hero of a modern novel, as possessing a sickly sort of sensibility, and almost dead with the powerful stimulus of feeling, occasioned by a sense of wounded honour, declares that he despised the shame of the cross. (Heb. xii. 2.) Pilate was amazed, when informed that our Lord had so soon expired; and sent for the cen-

turion, who superintended the execution, to ascertain the fact. (Mark xv. 44, 45.) That nature was not exhausted when our Lord expired is certain ; because, just before he dismissed his spirit, he cried with a loud voice, certainly to show that he was still full of strength and vigour, and not naturally at the point of death. His quitting the body immediately after, was a full proof of the truth of his previous assertion, that no man should deprive him of life ; but that he would lay it down of himself. And it is a remarkable fact, that these very circumstances of his death, convinced the Roman centurion that he was more than mortal. And the centurion who stood over against him, observing that he expired with so loud a cry, said, Surely this man was the Son of God. (Mark xv. 39. See Campbell's translation.)

The Jews however were justly chargeable with the murder of Christ, because they not only indulged a murderous disposition, but were guilty of those overt acts which would have been fatal to any mere man.

But the death of Christ was neither natural, nor violent ; it was supernatural. Socinians say, the Jews sacrificed Christ to their malice ; and Christians say, "Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God." Being entirely free from sin, he was not naturally subject to death ; and he voluntarily laid down his life, (over which he had power, it being at his own disposal,) that he might "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

It is worthy of remark, that when the sanhedrim were deliberating about putting our Saviour to death, under an idea that he was a deceiver of the people, the high priest was instructed in the vicarious nature of the death he was to die, by the spirit of prophecy. He said unto them, ye know nothing at all, nor consider, that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself, but being high priest that same year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation ; and not for that nation only, but that also,

he should gather together in one the children of God, that were scattered abroad." (John xi. 49—52.)

SECTION VII.

ON CHRIST AS A SIN OFFERING.

THE following texts speak of Christ as a sacrifice and sin offering: Isaiah liii. 10; 2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. viii. 3, see marginal reading; Heb. vii. 27; ix. 25, 28; x. 12, 26; Ephes. v. 2. The Greek of these passages, rendered sin offering, and sacrifice for sin, is the same as the Seventy have used to designate the legal sacrifices under the law. It has been shown that they were figurative representations of the sacrifice of our Lord; and hence it follows, that his was a real sacrifice for the sin of the world.

The sin offering under the law was given to the priest by Jehovah, to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord. (Lev. x. 17.) Hence Christ, our sin offering, bare our sins upon the cross. (Isaiah liii. 11, 12; Heb. ix. 28; 1 Peter ii. 24.)

Upon these passages it will be proper to make a few remarks. It has been sufficiently proved, when the Jewish sacrifices were under consideration, that the word *nasa*, to bear, when connected with sin, means to bear the punishment of it. This word is used in Lev. x. 17, where the sin offering is said to bear the iniquity, etc., and in Isaiah liii. 12. The Seventy render *nasa* by *anenegkein*; and the apostle Paul, (Heb. ix. 28,) and Peter, (1 Peter ii. 24,) use the same Greek word as the Seventy. In all these three texts, therefore, to bear sin, signifies, to bear the punishment of sin.

In Isaiah liii. 11, the word *isbol*, he shall bear, is used. This is a stronger term than *nasa*, and is never connected with sin; but it means, to bear the punishment of it. So Bishop Louth has translated the passage *vaavonotham hu isbol*, for the punishment of their iniquities he shall bear.

In 1 Peter ii. 24, there is the most evident allusion to the sin offering under the law, and the difference between our Lord and the Jewish priests, as to the sacrifice offered, is most distinctly noticed. The Jewish priests did not bear the iniquity of the congregation in his own person: "God hath given you the sin offering to bear the iniquity," etc. But Jesus Christ was victim as well as priest; hence, to distinguish him from a priest, who bore the sins of the people by an animal sacrifice, the apostle says, who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree; for, under the law, the priest did not his own self, in his own body, bear the sins of the people, but in the body of the animal sacrificed. There would be no occasion for this particularity of language, but to show that though a Jewish priest bore sin by the substitution of an animal, Jesus bore sin in his own person. No priest ever before bare sin in his own person. Hence it is, that so much stress is laid upon it in the New Testament. "He gave himself for us:" "He hath washed us from our sins in his own blood."

It is objected, that to bear sin signifies no more than to bear it away; that is, to persuade us to part with it; and this Christ did by his doctrine, which he confirmed by his death on the cross. The Hebrew words *nasa* and *sabal*, in verses 11, 12, it is said, cannot mean that he bore the punishment of sin in our stead, because the same words are found in verse 4, where they are applied to our griefs and sorrows, and are said by the evangelist, (Matt. viii. 17,) to have been fulfilled when he healed the sick; but he did not heal the people by taking their diseases on himself.

The phrase, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, is frequently, in the New Testament, applied to passages in the Old, merely by way of accommodation, when there is a coincidence in the events; though the prophets had no reference to the event mentioned in the gospel, as a fulfilment of the prediction. When Herod had destroyed the children of Bethlehem, Matthew remarks upon it, "Then was ful-

filled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying," etc. (Matt. ii. 17.) The reference is to Jer. xxxi. 15; but if we read the two following verses, they clearly show that the prophet could not refer to the children destroyed by Herod. "Thus saith the Lord, refrain," etc. But the children destroyed by Herod have not, and never will "come again from the land of the enemy; nor is there hope that these children shall come again to their own border." The journey of our Lord to Egypt and his return, are said to have taken place that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." (Matt. ii. 15.) Here the reference is to Hosea xi. 1: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." In this passage it is certain the prophet does not predict the coming of Christ out of Egypt, but relates the historical fact which had taken place many centuries before he wrote, of the deliverance of the Israelites out of that land of bondage. A great many instances might be produced, of the evangelists referring to events mentioned in the Old Testament as accomplished in and by our Lord, when there is nothing more than a similarity, or coincidence, and and when the prophets referred to events of a different nature.

These remarks apply to the case in hand. The prophet had said of Christ, that he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs. He accounts for it thus: "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." But we cannot infer from his healing diseases, that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs. The prophet proceeds to state the sentiments of his countrymen as to the cause of his griefs and sorrows. "Yet we thought him judicially stricken; smitten of God, and afflicted." They judged him to be an impostor, and so justly punished for his own crimes. But they did not judge of him thus when he cured the people, but when he hung upon the cross. In opposition to this opinion of the Jews, that the griefs and sorrows of Christ were the just punishment of his own

crimes, the prophet goes on to show the true cause of his sufferings: "But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was smitten for our iniquities; the chastisement, by which our peace is effected, was laid upon him, and by his bruises we are healed." It is certain from this, as well as from what follows, that his griefs and sorrows refer to his sufferings when he was put to death. The prophet explains the cause of his griefs and sorrows by saying, "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; and by his stripes we are healed." It necessarily follows, that the prediction was not accomplished when he healed the people, because he did not then suffer the griefs and sorrows of death; nor did he heal them by his bruises, but by his miracles. The evangelist therefore refers to the prophet, not because the prediction was accomplished, but because the same language was suited to both events. The apostle Peter applies the prophecy to the healing virtue of Christ's blood in the hearts of sinners. (1 Peter ii. 21.) "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes," not miracles, "we are healed."

There are these three substantial reasons why the prophesy, respecting our Lord's bearing the griefs and carrying the sorrows of the people, was not accomplished when he healed the diseases of the multitude. 1. The fact of Christ being a man of sorrows is explained by the information, that he bare our griefs, etc. But it does not appear that he was a man of sorrows, when he healed the people of their diseases. And that circumstance is so far from proving it, that we may be sure it gave our Lord pleasure, not pain, to remove their sicknesses. 2. The griefs and sorrows of Christ, referred to by the prophet, are certainly those which he suffered at death; this is clear from the whole chapter. And as his sufferings, according to the prophet, were occasioned by his bearing our griefs, etc., he must have done this upon the cross; but he was not dying on the cross when he healed the multitudes. 3. The apostle Peter refers the cure wrought by Christ as the

prophet does the sins of the soul, and not to the diseases of the body: the former says, "He bare our sins that we should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed:" the latter says, "He was wounded for our transgressions," etc. Both attribute the cures which he wrought to the wounds, bruises, and stripes, which he received on the cross. Now as the evangelist quotes the words of the prophet merely in reference to bodily diseases, and as these cures were effected not by his stripes, but by his miracles, it is certain that he applies the words of the prophecy only by way of accommodation, (a common thing as I have shown, with the New Testament writers,) and not as receiving their literal accomplishment in the miraculous restoration of those who had laboured under bodily infirmities and afflictions. Thus this passage is taken out of the hands of our opponents.

It is impossible, I believe, for language to express in terms more decisive than those employed in this chapter, the doctrine of substitution. In the 7th and 8th verses, Lowth's translation runs thus: "It was exacted, and he was made answerable. For the transgression of my people, he was smitten to death." His being put to death for the sins of men, does not denote merely his dying for their benefit; but must here denote his dying in their stead. Because his suffering for our sins was inflicted by the Almighty, whose proper province it is to punish the sins of men which are committed against himself. "Jehovah hath made to light upon him the iniquity of us all: it pleased Jehovah to crush him with affliction." It is possible, in some circumstances, for one person to suffer for or on account of the crimes of another, without the sufferer being, strictly speaking, punished for the other's crimes; because the magistrate, to whom the punishment of crime properly belongs, may not be concerned in the affair. But when a magistrate inflicts suffering for a crime, such suffering is punishment. And to deny this, is to deny that there is such a thing as punishment. Christ, the prophet says, was wounded, bruised, chastised, smitten to death, cut

off, crushed, and punished for our iniquities. This suffering was inflicted by the hand of God, who is the supreme magistrate, and to whom the punishment of iniquity belongs; and this circumstance proves beyond contradiction, that what he suffered for our sins was, in the strict and proper sense of the word, punishment.

To evade the force of this remark, it is said, that God did not himself inflict any of the sufferings of Christ directly, but merely permitted the Jews to put him to death; as God is frequently in scripture said to do what he only permits others to do. To this I answer, that though God permitted the Jews to abuse his Son, he could not, and, in fact, did not, approve of their wicked conduct; for the prophet, alluding to the part they took in this affair, says, "By an oppressive judgment he was taken off;" and an act of oppression cannot possibly be pleasing to God. But when the prophet mentions the part God acted in the tragedy, he says, that it pleased the Lord to crush him. What he suffered from Jehovah, therefore, must have been something different from what he suffered from the Jews.

Bishop Stillingfleet hath some good remarks on the words, "Jehovah hath made to light upon him the iniquity of us all." "The word *phagang*, taken properly, signifies, either to meet with one by chance, or out of kindness; or else for an encounter, with an intention to destroy that which it meets with. So Judges viii. 21: Rise thou, *uphegang banu*, fall upon us, that is, run upon us with thy sword and kill us. Judges xv. 12: 'Swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me yourselves;' where the same word is used; and they explain the meaning of it in the next words, verse 13, 'We will not kill thee.' Amos v. 19: 'As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him;' *uphegang*, that is, with a design to kill him. Now I suppose they will not say that our sins met with Christ by chance, since it is said that God laid on him the iniquity, etc.; nor, out of kindness; it must be therefore out of enmity, and with a design to destroy him. And so our sins cannot be understood as the mere occasion of Christ's death, but as the pro-

per impulsive cause of it." (See Satisfaction of Christ, pages 96, 97.)

It is not necessary to say much on the quibbles about the bearing away of sin. The Socinian interpretation is, that he bears away sin by the gospel, as the gospel persuades men to put away their sins. The apostle says, "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" so that unless his own body means the gospel, and the tree intends our conversion, this interpretation cannot be admitted.

The object of the sin offering under the law, in bearing the iniquity of the congregation, was, "to make atonement for them before the Lord." And atonement was the effect of Christ bearing our sins. Upon this point our adversaries triumph. They say the word atonement occurs only once in the New Testament; (Rom. v. 11;) and there it ought to have been translated reconciliation. This we admit. But if they appeal to the original in that one instance, they must allow us to appeal to it in others.

It is allowed, I believe, by all christian interpreters, as well as by the most ancient of the Jewish, that Daniel ix. 24, contains a prediction respecting the Messiah. It is here predicted of him that he was to make reconciliation for iniquity. The words are *ulecapper avon*, and signify to make atonement for iniquity. Every scholar knows that it is the word *capbar* which is translated atonement in the Old Testament. The Seventy have rendered *capbar* in this text by *exilasasthai*. By rendering the same Greek word into the same English, in the New Testament as is done in the Old, we shall get a few more texts. Heb. ii. 17: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, (*eis to ilaskesthai*), to make atonement for the sins of the people." The same Greek word, as a noun, occurs in two other places in the New Testament. 1 John ii. 2: "And he is (*ilasmos*) the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John iv. 10: "Herein

is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be (*ilasmon*) the atonement for our sins." Here then are four texts in which atonement for sins is attributed to Christ; and these are more than sufficient to establish the doctrine.

When treating on the substitution of Jewish sacrifices, I proved the doctrine; and, I think, beyond successful contradiction, from the use of the word *caphar*. The Seventy render this word by the derivatives of *ilao*. The argument applies therefore, in all its force, to Christ. As the animal sacrifices made atonement for the lives of the Israelites, by being substituted for them, so Christ made atonement for the sins of our souls, by suffering in our stead.

SECTION VIII.

ON RECONCILIATION AND REDEMPTION BY CHRIST.

UPON the subject of reconciliation, the Socinians assume a tone of triumph. They continually remind us that Christ is often said to have died to reconcile men to God, but never to reconcile God to men. They insist upon it that God needed no reconciliation; for he "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," etc. This and other texts of a similar cast, represent the gift of Christ as the effect, and not the cause, of the love of God to his creatures.

It is difficult to know what the Socinians mean, when they say that God needed no reconciliation. If he be perfectly reconciled to his creatures, it must be admitted, that no atonement for sin was necessary; but it will also necessarily follow, that the practice of sin need not be given up; for why should a man deny himself of any sinful gratification, if sin be not displeasing to his Maker? Neither do I see how man can need any reconciliation to God. If God does not object to men,

on account of their sins, they cannot feel any objection to him for granting them this liberty. But if God be reconciled to sinners, as such, why has he forbidden sin, and threatened to punish it? or why does the sinner need forgiveness?

I suppose I shall be told, that sin is the sole cause of the difference between God and men; and that when sin is given up, a reconciliation is effected; the change therefore that is necessary to reconciliation, must take place in the creature, not in the Creator. It is granted then, that God is not reconciled to those who are living in the wilful violation of his laws. It cannot therefore be denied, that it is as necessary to reconcile God to the sinner, as to reconcile the sinner to God. The act by which God manifests his reconciliation to the sinner, is the pardon of his sins; and the act by which the sinner manifests his reconciliation to God, is a return to the paths of obedience; and God pardons sin the moment man forsakes it. But the great question is, whether the reformation of the offender be the only moving cause, which induces God to forgive him. I answer in the negative, and prove it from the unchangeableness of Deity; the very attribute which our opponents think fatal to our doctrine. Why will not God be reconciled to a man while living in sin? Because, say the Socinians, he is immediately holy, and therefore cannot take pleasure in unrighteousness. I wish to know, whether God's justice be not as immutable as his holiness. And if God is unchangeably just, it is impossible he should waive the claims of his justice. The exercise of justice consists in the execution of equitable laws. The laws of God promise rewards to the obedient, and threaten punishment to the disobedient; it is as much the province of justice to execute the threatenings, as to make good the promises; and since the justice of God is as immutable as his nature, he must do the one as well as the other.

I know some acute divines have made a distinction here. They say, that to set aside the promises would be an act of injustice to the obedient, who are

entitled to them by law; but to set aside the threatnings in favour of an offender, would be no act of injustice, either to saint or sinner. But I think it would. Moral laws are made from a regard to moral order. When we say that moral laws require penal sanctions, we only say, in other words, that moral order cannot be maintained without the operation of a dread of punishment. But the threatnings of law, cannot operate as a restraint on persons who believe there is no serious intention to execute them. Suppose then that the threatnings will be dispensed with, and they immediately lose all their force; but if they be necessary to moral order, they cannot be set aside, without serious injury to the public, whose welfare is inseparably connected with obedience to law. In a word, God is immediately just, and no considerations can induce him to violate this attribute, any more than any other perfection of his nature.

It follows, from the above, that the penalty of the law cannot be remitted to the offender, without being executed on his substitute. It is only on this principle, that God can "be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Reconciliation, therefore, as applied to God, does not suppose any change to be wrought in his disposition towards his offending creatures, (the mercifulness of which inclined him to provide a Saviour for them,) but satisfaction to be made to his justice, whose claims could not be dispensed with, without lessening the authority of his laws. We therefore contend for a twofold reconciliation; the one relating to God, removing the obstacle to our being admitted into his favour, arising from his justice, by the suffering of Christ in our stead; the other relating to man, consisting in a change of his disposition towards God, from enmity to love.

In Romans v. 10, the word reconciled, occurs twice, and cannot be applied to persons actually turned to God; because (1.) This reconciliation is said to have taken place at the time when the enmity of the creature was in existence. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled," etc. According to the Socinian sys-

tem they must have been friends when reconciled ; but according to the apostle, they were enemies. (2.) This reconciliation took place at the time of the death of Christ, and therefore cannot be the reconciliation intended by our opponents, that being effected only at the time of conversion. The proof is, after the apostle had remarked, "When we were enemies," etc., he immediately adds, "much more being reconciled, we shall be saved," etc. Here reconciliation is ascribed to the death, and salvation to the life of Christ. The former is past, "We were reconciled ;" the latter is future, "We shall be saved." The words, much more, are an inference drawn from what had been accomplished by the death of Christ, to what would be accomplished by his life, in a resurrection state. The apostle's argument is destroyed by the Socinian hypothesis. In taking the reconciliation in this text to be effected by the conversion of the sinner, the death of Christ is supposed to have no influence upon it, as distinguished from his resurrection. For our opponents contend that the conversion of a sinner is effected by the gospel ; and is ascribed to the death of Christ, only because he confirmed the gospel by his death. But, if you ask them whether he confirmed the gospel by his death without his resurrection, they reply, "No ; he died that he might rise again, and by his resurrection confirm the gospel." (Extract from Stillingfleet on the Resurrection.) But the apostle is showing, not what was done for men jointly, but separately, by the death and life of Christ ; we were reconciled by his death, and shall be saved by his life ; and the former having been already effected, the apostle argues that we may confidently expect the latter. This is the ground of the apostle's glorying in the next verse : "We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement ;" *katallagen*, the reconciliation.* The phrases,

* In this passage the death or blood of Christ is called the reconciliation, for the same reason that *ilasterion* is called, in Rom. iii. 25, the propitiation ; not because it produced any change in the disposition of God towards his creatures, but because it removed

“When we were yet without strength,” verse 6; “While we were yet sinners,” verse 8; and, “When we were enemies,” verse 10, must refer to the same period; and at this period the apostle declares, “Christ died for us,” and, “We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” The reconciliation, therefore, was not only effected by the death of Christ, but it was effected also at the time of his death; and consequently cannot possibly mean the conversion of the sinner by the doctrine of Christ.

But this reconciliation provided by the Deity, render-

the great difficulty to the admission of sinners to the favour and friendship of God, arising from his justice. Hence, the reason for which God has set him forth a propitiation is said, in the next verse, to be, “That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” And hence, the reason why his blood is styled the reconciliation, is stated in the preceding verses to be, that he died for us, or in our stead.

I know that our opponents will not readily concede that to die for us, and to die in our stead, are terms of similar import; but, if Romans v. 6—8, be read attentively, we must perceive that the apostle thought they were. Macknight remarks, on verse 8, that Raphelius in his notes on this verse, from Xenophon, hath shown that the phrase, died, *uper*, for us, signifies, died in our stead; which likewise is its meaning in verse 7; and Dr. Dodd observes on verse 6, “Nor can I ever find that,” etc. This is most certainly the meaning of the word in John xi. 50—52: “Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for (*uper*, in the stead of,) the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for (*uper*, in the stead of,) that nation; and not for (*uper*, in the stead of,) that nation only,” etc. The Socinians say that Christ’s dying for us, signifies his dying for our benefit. We grant it: but the question is, how are we benefited by his death? The authorities mentioned above show, by his being substituted in our place and stead. We can make no sense of a person’s dying for a righteous man, or dying for a good man, on any other supposition than that he died in his stead. And it is in this sense that Christ died for the ungodly, and “that he died for us.” In the latter passage, the high priest conceived that either Christ must die, or the people perish. His dying under these circumstances shows clearly that he suffered in the room and stead of the people. And as the high priest spake by the spirit of prophecy, he uttered a divine truth. *Uper Christon* is rendered, in Christ’s stead, in 2 Corinthians v. 20.

ing the exercise of his mercy consistent with the full and glorious display of his justice, is admirably adapted to subdue our enmity, and to encourage us to look to him for salvation. This argument the apostle urges: "Much more, being reconciled, we shall," etc.

In 2 Cor. v. 18—21, the apostle shows how the reconciliation effected by the death of Christ is calculated to bring about the conversion of sinners. "God," says he, "hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation," etc., to the end. Here we learn what God did towards the reconciliation of the world to himself; he published a pardon to his rebellious creatures in the name of Christ, "Not imputing their trespasses unto them." We also learn the ground on which this pardon is published,— "For he hath made him to be sin (*amartian*, sin-offering) for us," etc.* Thus the atonement is made the basis of a sinner's reconciliation to God.

No sovereign can expect rebel subjects to return to their duty, till he has issued a proclamation, inviting them to it by a promise of pardon. But in all cases of this kind, a few, at least, of the most notorious offenders are excepted from the general amnesty, for the purpose of maintaining the dignity of the government, by giving some examples of the vengeance of the law. To proclaim mercy to the whole, without executing the laws in a single instance, would have a bad effect: it would suppose the government viewed the laws as too severe, or itself as too weak to put them in force, or that it exercised compassion at the expense of justice. And upon any of these suppositions, the laws would lose their authority: hence, no human government ever comes to a parley with rebels, while it possesses authority to punish their rebellion; nor proclaims pardon to the vanquished, without executing some of the

* All expositors are agreed that the word *amartian* in this place signifies sin offering; and Dr. Clarke, on the place, has demonstrated the point beyond contradiction. It will be shown afterwards, that as a sin offering, Christ was substituted in the room and stead of sinners.

criminals. In the gospel, however, there are no exceptions in the proclamation of mercy. It is a faithful saying, that Christ came to save the chief as well as the least of sinners. "Whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish." "He tasted death for every man." What, then, becomes of justice? Who will regard laws which are not put in force? And how can the dignity of that government be supported, which deprives the law of authority, by annulling its penal sanctions? The doctrine of substitution, and that only, solves the difficulty. Some of the worst sinners must have been denied the benefit of the covenant of grace, and been made examples of the displeasure of God against sin, had not Christ died in our stead. Divine justice cannot be trampled under foot; it must take its course, either on the sinner or on his substitute. Hence the proclamation of mercy to all the offenders of our race, is founded on the doctrine in question. For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be a sin offering for us.

Thus we see in what sense "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." God accepted Christ as a sin offering for them, and on this ground promised to pardon their trespasses, on their becoming reconciled to him; and this included in it, a belief of the promised pardon, disposing them to return to their duty.

According to the Socinian interpretation, God was in the preaching of Christ, and by it reconciling the world to himself. Against this interpretation observe, the apostle had just before said, "God hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." He immediately explains what this ministry of reconciliation was, by adding, "To wit, that God was in Christ," etc. Upon this, Bishop Stillingfleet remarks, (*Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction*, pages 320, 321,) "Why is the ministry of reconciliation attributed only to the apostles, and not to Christ, which ought in the first place to have been given to him, since the apostles did only receive it from him? Why is that ministry said to be, namely,

that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself? Was this all the subject of the apostle's preaching, to tell the world that Christ persuaded men to leave off their sins? How comes God to reconcile the world to himself by the preaching of Christ, since Christ saith he was not sent to preach to the world, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? Was the world reconciled to God by the preaching of Christ, before they had ever heard of him? Why is God said not to impute to men their trespasses by the preaching of Christ, rather than his apostles, if the not imputing were no more than declaring God's readiness to pardon, which was equally done by the apostles as by Christ himself? Lastly: what force or dependence is there in the last words, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin," etc., if all he had been speaking of before had only related to Christ's preaching? How was he made sin, more than the apostles, if he were only treated as a sinner on account of the same doctrine which they preached equally with him? And might not men be said to be made the righteousness of God in the apostles, as well as in Christ, if no more be meant, but being persuaded to be righteous by the doctrine delivered to them?"

In Ephesians ii. 14—16, mention is made of a reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles, as well as between God and men. "For he is our peace," etc. Here the enmity between Jew and Gentile is said to be abolished in his flesh. No man in his sober senses can suppose this phrase to mean, by his doctrine. It undoubtedly refers to his atonement. Having become a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, the Gentiles are admitted to equal privileges with the Jews, and both are required to be reconciled to God. Thus the reconciliation of both in one body to God, is said to be by the cross; and this phrase is never put for the doctrine of Christ, but for his death.

Colossians i. 20—22, deserves consideration. "And having made peace," etc. This passage throws considerable light upon the preceding. The cross merely

is mentioned in the above text; here it is called the blood of the cross. There the apostle speaks of the enmity being removed in his flesh; here the same thing is said to be done in the body of his flesh, through death; or, with a little transposition, as some critics render it, "through death in the body of his flesh." If this particularity and precision of phrase does not make his death upon the cross the foundation of our reconciliation with God, it seems to me impossible for language to prove anything.

It is objected here, that the object of Christ is said to be, to reconcile things in heaven, as well as things in earth. By things in heaven, it is said, the holy angels are meant; and these stood in no need of atonement, having never sinned. But I deny, that by things in heaven the holy angels are intended. God is said to reconcile, by Christ, the things in heaven to himself; but the holy angels stood in no more need of reconciliation to God, than of atonement by Christ. The only things in heaven that ever stood in need of reconciliation to God, are the spirits of just men made perfect; and it has been shown, under the priesthood of Christ, that his sacrifice extended backwards to the first transgression, as well as forwards to the end of time. Those who attained to heaven before Christ suffered, believed the promise, and were saved on the credit of it; hence, when he died on the cross, he redeemed the pledge by actually suffering for their sins.

It will, perhaps, be said, that in all these texts there is nothing said directly about God being reconciled to us, but only of our being reconciled to God. Bishop Stillingfleet has an excellent remark on this point: "There are two ways," says he, (*Satisfaction of Christ*, pages 317—319,) "whereby a party, justly offended, may be said to be reconciled to him that hath offended him. First: when he is not only willing to admit of terms of agreement, but doth declare his acceptance of the mediation of a third person; and that he is so well satisfied with what he hath done in order to it, that he

appoints this to be published to the world, to assure the offender, that if the breach continues, the fault wholly lies upon himself. The second is, when the offender doth accept of the terms of agreement offered, and submits himself to him whom he hath provoked, and is upon that received into favour," etc.

The following texts relate to Christ as redeemer: Matthew xx. 28; Mark x. 45; Romans iii. 24; 1 Corinthians vi. 20; Galatians iii. 13; Ephesians i. 7; Colossians i. 14; 1 Timothy ii. 6; Titus ii. 14; Hebrews ix. 12, 15; 1 Peter i. 18, 19; 2 Peter ii. 1; and Revelation v. 9; in all of which, either *lutron*, which signifies to loose, or set free, by paying a ransom price; or *exagorazo*, to buy from or out of condemnation to death, are the terms employed; and sufficiently show the nature and value of that redemption which Christ hath brought to us.

It is usual with our opponents to answer all these texts by saying that the word redemption, in scripture, is frequently applied to persons and things, for which no proper ransom price was paid. We grant it; but we insist that a price is sometimes mentioned. (See Leviticus xxv. 47, 52.) The question, therefore, is, whether Christ hath redeemed us without paying a ransom price. "The Lord bought them." "Ye are bought with a price." "He gave himself a ransom for all." "He gave his life a ransom for many." "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." The last refuge which is resorted to is, that all this is to be understood metaphorically; and that the thing intended is, the recovering of men to the service of God, by the doctrine of Christ. According to this explication, himself, his life, his blood, means his doctrine, which he himself confirmed by his blood. Now, it is a remarkable fact, that we are not in any one solitary text said to be redeemed by the doctrine of Christ; and they would have more probability on their side, were they to affirm that we are redeemed by the miracles of Christ, since his doctrine was con-

firmed by these, and not by his death. When the saints sing, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," a rational christian informs us they mean, "Thou wast a teacher, and hast redeemed us to God by thy doctrine." They would be silly songsters, if he were not a silly interpreter.

Another cavil urged is, that the redemption mentioned in some of the aforementioned passages is merely from the practice of sin, and not from its guilt. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself," etc. The redemption mentioned, 1 Peter i. 18, 19, was "from their vain conversation, received by tradition from their fathers." And how does it follow that his blood could not be properly a price of redemption on this account. Our redemption includes in it many particulars. (1.) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. (2.) We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. (3.) He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. (4.) There is "the redemption of our body," which will be effected in "the day of redemption." (5.) He hath "obtained eternal redemption for us." To accomplish all this, glorified saints sing, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and people, and tongue, and nation."

The terms employed in the above passages clearly prove the doctrine of substitution. "He gave his life (*lutron anti pollon*) a ransom in the stead of many." (Matthew xx. 28.) The same words occur exactly in Mark x. 45, *Antilutron uper panton*, "a ransom in the stead of all." *Anti* being connected with *lutron* in these texts, clearly intends a substitution. Thus, when one man is said to die for another, the idea of substitution is always understood. When David exclaimed, "Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom!" the meaning is plain enough; he wished he had died in the stead of his son Absalom. So Christ is said to have "redeemed us from the curse of the law;" and how he did this is immediately explained, "Being

made a curse for us." Dr. Macknight renders this passage thus, "Christ hath bought us off from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." The doctrine of substitution could not well be expressed in more explicit terms. The word *anti*, certainly means instead, in the following passages: Matthew ii. 22, "In the room of his father Herod;" Luke xi. 11, "Will he for (*anti*) a fish," etc.; 1 Corinthians, xi. 15, *Oti e kome anti peribolaion*, "For her hair for a covering." This word certainly is often taken in other senses; but in these instances there is no room for dispute, and when it is connected with *lutron*, all the best critics are agreed that it contains the idea of substitution.

It is objected, that if a price of redemption was really paid, it must have been paid to him who held us captives, and that was the devil. Absurd as this opinion is, it was maintained by some of the ancient fathers; but it is presumed, the moderns will be ashamed of it. I will answer this quibble in the words of Stillingfleet, (On the Satisfaction of Christ, page 199, etc.,) "We may very easily conceive a double sort of captivity, from whence a redemption may be obtained; the one by force, when a captive is detained purposely, for advantage to be made by his redemption: and the other in a judicial manner, when the law condemns a person to captivity, and the thing designed by the law is not a mere price, but satisfaction to be made to the law, upon which a redemption may be obtained. Now, in the former case, it is necessary that the price be paid to the person who detains; because the reason of his detaining was the expectation of the price to be paid; but in the latter, the detainer is merely the instrument for execution of the law, and the price of redemption is not to be paid to him, but to those who are most concerned in the honour of the law. This distinction is supported by Galatians iii. 13. We are bought off from the curse of the law, and, therefore, the price is paid to the Judge of heaven, not to the devil."

It is very unfortunate for those who contend that we are not redeemed with the blood of Christ as a price,

but by the power of his doctrine, that not one text can be urged, in connexion with this subject, which favours their hypothesis. Redemption by mere power, is inconsistent with the death of the Redeemer. If he loses his life in the attempt to rescue a captive, that circumstance may render the attempt abortive, but cannot possibly be the cause of success. And yet the scriptures uniformly refer to the death of Christ, and the blood of Christ, as the great means of our redemption. It is said that these are figurative terms; but, if so, they ought to be appropriate. No writer in his senses would employ death as a figure of power, any more than he would refer to a statue to illustrate the motion of lightning. We shall, perhaps, be told, for the thousandth time, that his death confirmed and gave authority to his doctrine, and by the power of his doctrine men are redeemed from the slavery of vice. So it seems redemption is attributed to his death, not because his death procured redemption, but because, had he not died, his doctrine would not have been confirmed; and had that not been confirmed, it could not have exerted a moral power on the minds of men sufficient to emancipate them from their state of moral degradation. According to this method of arguing, redemption might as well have been attributed to the birth of Christ, as to his death; for, had he not been born, he could not have been a teacher; and had he not been a teacher, he could not have redeemed the world by his doctrine. His birth was necessary to his becoming a prophet, and his doctrine was necessary to reform mankind! But when they are pressed upon the point, they confess that his death did not confirm his doctrine, but his resurrection; and that the stress is laid upon his death, because, had he not died, he could not have risen from the dead. This is removing the allusion a step farther off. If we are really redeemed by power only, and not by price; if that power lay in the doctrine of Christ, and if his doctrine derived its power from his resurrection, then the sacred writers, in teaching us the doctrine of redemption by

power, would have attributed redemption, either directly or remotely, to his resurrection ; but there is no allusion to either in any one text where redemption is mentioned. The word of God is said to be quick and powerful ; and Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead ; but our redemption is never ascribed to either.

ON UNIVERSAL RESTORATION.

PREFACE.

If the writer of the following pages had not believed that the interests of morality are materially involved in this controversy, he would not have recommended his thoughts upon it to the notice of the public. The immoral tendency of the restoration system is shown in the course of this work.

One of the most important doctrines of christianity, the doctrine of atonement, has no place in the Universalist's creed, if consistency be regarded. It cannot be reconciled with his doctrine of corrective punishment. Mr. Weaver observes: "Divine justice is that perfection in God, by which he endeavours continually to make all intelligences just."* According to this representation, justice does not look backward, and punish "according to the deeds done in the body;" but forward, and disposes of her stripes in the way best calculated to correct the moral pravity of the mind. In this system, therefore, the doctrine of guilt has no place: no man need apply for "redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins;" (Eph. i. 7;) but merely for "the renewing of the Holy Ghost;" (Titus iii. 5;) since the recovery of the mind to virtue is the great point to which the exercise of divine justice is directed. If the blood of atonement be not counted, upon this scheme, an "unholy thing;" it must be considered, at least, as an "unnecessary thing." The most intelligent of the Universalists are fully aware of this, and have, therefore, very prudently, taken sanctuary in Socinianism.

* Endless Misery Overthrown, p. 9.

The author has endeavoured to leave the immoral no alternative betwixt conversion, and a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." He seriously wishes such to weigh well what is advanced; and, perhaps, they will see that even the infinite love and mercy of God are not to be called into question, should they, by rejecting the grace offered in the gospel, render themselves eternally wretched. Such a view of things, it is hoped, may have a happy influence on their minds, and lead them to improve the present day of their visitation, so as to insure present and eternal happiness. Should this be the case in a single instance, he will think himself amply compensated for the time and labour which he has devoted to this subject. He is, however, too well acquainted with the prejudices of mankind in favour of schemes which are not very rigid in their exactions on the score of morality, to expect that many will be reclaimed, who have given their assent to the system here opposed. His great aim has been to preserve the serious christian from falling into what he considers a very dangerous error.

The arguments which prove the endless duration of future punishment, are here brought forward sparingly, as that subject is nearly exhausted by Messrs. Taylor, Fuller, and Jerram; whose valuable writings merit the most serious and attentive perusal.

There is not a class of writers who talk more about candour, charity, and liberality, or who discover less of these christian graces, than the Universalists. Mr. Weaver, after expressing his disapprobation of Mr. Huntington's asperity, proceeds to call him, "the surgeon—the butcher—the raving sinner."* He is not less ceremonious with his other adversaries. One is called "a snarling cynic," and another "a flippant fop." Without presuming to justify Mr. H., it is very natural to inquire, whether he has not as much right to deal in hard words as Mr. W.? Will an Universalist pretend that other denominations of christians are not equally entitled with himself to think freely upon

* Free Thoughts, Preface, p. 17.

religious subjects, and to embrace those sentiments which appear to them to be most conformable to divine truth? If he will not, he ought not to blame them for believing that the doctrine of universal restoration is an erroneous and a dangerous system. The candour and liberality of the Universalists, it seems, consists in attaching little or no importance to articles of faith and modes of worship. All who come up to this standard, receive the fraternal embrace; but such as think differently, are stigmatized as bigots. There is certainly such a thing as being bigoted against those who are considered as bigots. And are those who indulge this spirit more to be commended than the bigots whom they condemn? No, in no wise.

Mr. Wright "presumes," he tells us, "that the editor of the Theological Magazine is one of those mistaken good men who rejoices in the ungodlike doctrine of endless misery."* Must a man rejoice in every doctrine which he believes to be true? Then Mr. Wright rejoices in the doctrine that many millions of his fellow-creatures will be tormented in hell for an age. But Mr. Wright calls him one of the good men, and then ascribes to him dispositions that, for malignity, can only just be equalled by those of devils!

Mr. Vidler, too, affirms that "the leading men both among Calvinists and Arminians, are doing everything which interest, connexion, favour, or frowns, can do, to prevent the threatening evil,—to stop the progress of the universal doctrine."† It must be remarked, that that this charge is altogether unsupported by evidence. The leading men are selected out of these two bodies of christians, for Mr. V. to spit his venom at. It is—but language does not furnish a name for so vile a calumny. Let Mr. V. go and learn what that scripture meaneth, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

Mr. Samuel Bradburn is charged with saying, that "the Universalists put hell fire in the place of the

* Examination of Ryland's Sermon, p. 6.

† Winchester's Dialogues, Editor's Preface, p. 11, 4th edition.

blood of Christ." This produced a letter from Mr. V., addressed to Mr. S. Bradburn, and all the Methodist preachers in England. As none of them honoured it with their notice, Mr. V. makes an ostentatious triumph in the advertisement of his reply to Mr. Fisher. The contents of Mr. V.'s letter are unknown to the author of this work. He did not so much as know that such a letter had been written, till he saw Mr. V. exulting in victory; and he then understood from a Universalist bookseller, that it was out of print. Should Mr. V. publish a new edition of his letter, he is desired to take notice of the following proof of Mr. Bradburn's assertion. Mr. Winchester, when speaking on the effects produced by different degrees of punishment, illustrates the subject by relating the case of a Mr. M., who underwent a severe flogging when he served in the army. "When he first began to feel the lash," says Mr. W., "he was exceedingly enraged; but, before he had received half his punishment, he saw clearly that they had acted right. He was entirely cured of all his rage; from which he was as much freed by his punishment, as ever an effect was produced by a cause. This I think is an argument *ad hominem*; and I think it must be admitted, that, although a certain degree of punishment will inflame, harden, and enrage, yet farther degrees produce quite contrary effects."* If men are as fully cured of their bad tempers by punishment, as ever an effect was produced by a cause; it may be demanded, in the name of common sense, how the blood of Christ can be concerned in the cure?

In the following work, much is said about the liberty of moral agents. It is not pretended, however, that men are free by nature to choose good, since this power was lost by the fall. Its restoration is ascribed to the grace of God through Jesus Christ; and hence the whole glory of man's redemption is as fully secured to the divine Redeemer by the advocates for moral

* Dialogues, pp. 163—164, 4th edition.

liberty, as it can be by the abettors of the doctrine of necessity.*

It may not be amiss to remark here a late distinction between salvation and restoration. Mr. Wright considers this as a matter of "no small importance," and charges Dr. Ryland with "unfairness," and with "changing the terms of the question," for not attending to it.† According to this distinction, the saved are preserved from going down into the pit, and the restored are delivered out of it. Mr. W. demands, "Why are the advocates for universal restoration charged with maintaining universal salvation?" The answer is, because they do maintain it in their writings. (See Winchester's Dialogues, preface, p. 7.) "Universal salvation," says he, "is an antidote to all these evils," etc. If they choose to give it up, they must give up, also, all those texts which relate to the salvation of sinners, such as 1 Timothy ii. 3, 4; iv. 10; as affording no aid to their cause; and then the controversy will be brought within a much narrower compass.‡

* "When a man loses a limb, or an eye, or is wounded in any mortal part, he cannot have that limb restored, or be recovered, but by a miracle; and the same will hold as to the spiritual functions; when they are lost or disabled, only he that gave them can restore them. Now, this the holy scriptures and the catholic church have taught us to be the case of the will of man, in its corrupted state, as to spiritual objects; and therefore the effectual interposition of God's power to restore man, is the christian doctrine. But though the restoring the faculty to its former state, be the immediate work of God's Spirit, yet the acts performed by that restored faculty are man's, and he is free in the exerting of them." —KING's *Origin of Evil*, *Law's Notes*, pp. 408, 409, 2nd edition.

† Mr. Winchester, in his Dialogues, p. 101, renders 1 Timothy ii. 3, 4, thus: "God our restorer, who will have all men to be restored." Now since the apostle uses the plural pronoun of the first person in this passage, (*emon*, our, or of us,) if we interpret it according to Mr. Wright's distinction, we must suppose that both Paul and Timothy would be adjudged to hell for a time; and if all men are to be restored, (and the Universalists will admit of no conditions here, nor of a restricted sense of the word,) then all men must be sent to hell; for none are said to be restored, according to their phraseology, but those who have endured future punishment.

‡ Examination, p. 28.

It may be necessary for the reader to know how strong his faith must be in order to believe the doctrine of the restoration. Mr. Winchester, in his sermon on Philippians iii. 20, observes, "It requires a vastly stronger faith to believe this important truth firmly upon the divine authority, than any one in the Bible; and therefore I do not wonder that many good people, who have faith enough to trust their souls in the hands of Jesus, and to believe that he will fulfil all his promises in their behalf, both as to soul and body, for this life and that which is to come, have not enough to enable them to believe the final restoration of all things.

"The faith that was necessary for Abraham, in order to believe that he should have a son in his old age, and should be the father of a multitude of nations, was not to be compared to the faith necessary to believe that our Lord is able, and that he will finally subdue, re-head in himself, reconcile, and restore all things.

"If God was to inform me by his word that he would create a thousand worlds more than he has, turn all the animals into rational creatures, change stones into living intelligences, and perform ten thousand more such wonders in creation; it would not be half so difficult for me to believe, as the doctrine of the restoration."

Who could have more effectually burlesqued the doctrine of the restoration? The father of the faithful had no faith, when compared with that of Winchester and his followers! If none can believe the restoration, but those who have this vastly stronger faith than is necessary to their own salvation, the author is under no apprehension on account of his readers!

ON UNIVERSAL RESTORATION.

SECTION I.

ON THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

THE Universalists pretend to prove from the divine perfections, as well as from divine revelation, that the restoration which they contend for, must take place; and that punishment cannot be eternal. The following observations go to prove that we cannot arrive at any certain conclusion upon this interesting subject, merely from reasoning on the perfections of God, since those perfections do not furnish us with data from which we may calculate, with precision, the future condition of impenitent sinners.

It may be supposed that some virtuous people have not so large a share of happiness, as of misery in this life; and hence it may seem reasonable that the Almighty should make up the deficiency in the life to come. But this does not apply to the case of the wicked. Abraham reasoned well in Genesis xviii. 25. Suppose, then, God were to annihilate the whole of the human race; the wicked at death, or after a period of suffering, and the righteous when their sum of happiness is equal to, or in some degree exceeds their sum of misery, what injury would his perfections sustain by this? Would he not be the same just, and holy, and good being, when man should be no more, that he was before man existed? Is he any more obliged to give us existence to eternity, than he was to give us existence from eternity? And

what obligation is he under to renew his mercies to those in another world, who only abuse them in this? It is so far, then, from being certain, from the perfections of God, that the wicked will be restored and put in possession of eternal happiness; that it cannot be proved, merely on this ground, that they will survive the present state of existence, or that even the righteous will live for ever. But though it cannot be proved by unassisted reason, that immortality belongs to man; we must not forget that this is brought to light by the gospel.

If sin be punished at all, the punishment must be in proportion to the magnitude of the offence. It is, therefore, impossible to conclude anything about the duration of punishment, till we have ascertained the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and this cannot be done by the light of nature. Our reasonings on the divine perfections would not have led us to conclude that the ground is cursed on account of sin: we could not have perceived so close a connexion between the moral and natural world, as to warrant the inference that a disorder in the one, would so materially affect the other. Much less could we have seen that the sin of man is the cause of the misery of the brute creation; for who can perceive any necessary connexion between the sin of a man, and the suffering of a beast? Yet our senses convince us that the earth is under a curse, and that the whole animal creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together; and revelation informs us of the cause. Had we other senses, we might, perhaps, trace the effects of sin much farther. It is allowed that the government of God is infinite, and that some connexion runs through the whole; and it is no more improbable that the whole universe might, in some way or other, be affected by the sin of man, than that it should contaminate our elements, and make the whole world groan with the miseries of its inhabitants. It must be observed too, that the laws of God have infinite authority stamped upon them, and that God has laid us under infinite obligations to obey them. When we put

all these things together; when we consider that sin may, perhaps, be infinite in its effects; that it is committed against an infinite Being, and that it is a violation of infinite obligations, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to prove that sin is not an infinite evil: and if it be an infinite evil, it must merit infinite or eternal punishment.

As lame an argument as Mr. Winchester affects to call this, he has made but a very lame reply to it.

1. "If sin be infinite, then we must ascribe to it one of the perfections of the Deity, which strikes me as absurd."* Is it absurd to say, that space is infinite? Is it absurd to say, some creatures will exist through infinite duration? Must infinity be ascribed to nothing but God?

2. "Actions must take their denomination from the actors, and not from the objects."† In estimating the magnitude of sin, the objects and the effects of it must be taken into the account, as well as the actors. It is certainly a much greater sin in a man to murder a friend who has a large family, and who has loaded him with favours, than to murder a person who stands in no such relation to him, and who has no family connexions, though the murderous disposition may possibly be the same in both cases. We must consider the objects. The common sense of mankind agrees that it is much more criminal to kill a friend, who has laid the murderer under great obligations, than to kill an indifferent person. We must consider the effects. If an unconnected person be slain, the evil goes no farther; but if the head of a family be taken away, by the dagger of the assassin, his widow and children, who were dependent upon him for support, are reduced to beggary and want; and will any man say this is no aggravation of the crime?

3. "Infinite actions, or actions of infinite magnitude, require infinite power to perform them."‡ Mr. Winchester allows that God will reward the righteous ac-

* Dialogues on the Restoration, p. 185. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

tions of his people with glory, infinite in duration. Their righteous actions then are infinite in their effects, though not performed by infinite power.

4. "All sins are offences against God, and if every offence against God is of infinite magnitude, how can any be greater? And thus all distinction between lesser and greater sins is entirely destroyed; and all sins will be esteemed equal, contrary to the whole tenor of the scriptures."* Mr. W. talks in this random way by supposing that sin takes its denomination from the actors only, and not from the objects: but I have shown this to be a mistake. Suppose sin against God to merit endless punishment, yet the degree of that punishment may be in proportion to the depravity of the actor; so that the distinction between lesser and greater sins is as fully preserved upon our scheme, as upon that of our opponents.†

It is a fundamental principle of the doctrine of the restoration, that punishment is corrective in its nature; but this cannot be inferred from the perfections of God. According to the regular operation of the laws of nature, some sins deprive men of the use of reason; the punishment in cases of this sort cannot be corrective, because the subjects of it are utterly incapable of moral

* Dialogues, p. 187.

† It is rather singular that Mr. W. should be so zealous for the distinction between lesser and greater sins, when, in the very next page, he has destroyed all just proportion between sin and punishment. For he observes upon Jeremiah xvi. 18, and Isaiah xl. 1, 2, "Here is a fact said to be accomplished, which, upon your scheme, can never be done to all eternity; for if every offence against God is of infinite magnitude, and deserves infinite punishment, none can ever have received single for one of their sins, far less double for all." Mr. W. here supposes they received double the punishment which their sins deserved. But if God may give sinners as much more punishment as they deserve, he may give them a thousand times more than they deserve: here is an end of divine justice. And what have sinners to fear from hell, suppose they only receive single for their sins, if the seventy years captivity of the Jews was double the punishment which their sins merited? I believe the words mean, God had given them double the punishment, on that occasion, that he had given for any former apostacy.

improvement. Other sins prove destructive to the animal economy; and reason cannot perceive how the punishment of death is a correction. And if God has not connected correction with punishment in this world, how can we be certain he will do it in the next? must he alter his laws to our advantage, as often as we choose to break them? Would not our reasonings on his attributes have led us to the conclusion, that present sufferings, as well as future, must be corrective, had not sense been on the other side of the question? It appears probable from reason, and certain from revelation, that God, in connecting misery with sin, designed misery to operate as a warning, and thereby to prevent the commission of sin; but there is a vast difference between punishment being a warning to others, and corrective to the individual sufferers. The ends of punishment must be ascertained, before we can conclude anything positively about its duration. I have shown that correction is not immediately connected with punishment in the present constitution of nature, and therefore that connexion is not necessary to the display of the divine perfections. No other end of punishment leads to any favourable conclusion respecting the doctrine of restoration. It cannot be denied that God intended misery to operate as a warning, unless we will oppose reason to revelation; and since warnings may be useful forever, to some or other of God's creatures, we cannot be sure that punishment will not be eternal.

The strength of sinful habits is a question of considerable importance in this controversy. It cannot be proved from the perfections of God, that sinful habits may not become unconquerable. If it be said that, by an omnipotent act, God may recover the very worst; the answer is, that if it were proper for God to operate in an irresistible manner against sin, he would have either prevented its existence, or crushed it at its birth. This conclusion may be denied by those who hold that the grace of God works irresistibly in some, and not at all in others; but it cannot be denied by

the Universalists, because they do not believe in the partiality of the divine affection in relation to his creatures. We see, then, that the constitution of the divine government is against this omnipotent act, and we cannot pretend to prove from the divine attributes, that God must alter his laws in favour of the most undeserving of his creatures. On the other hand, facts testify that some effectually defeat his gracious designs concerning them in this world ; they die hardened in sin ; and if God does not new model his government in their favour, in the other world, there can be no hope of their conversion and restoration.

In reasoning on the divine perfections, we are liable to contradict acknowledged facts. Thus Messrs. Vidler and Wright argue from the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as though man did not possess moral liberty, and as though sin did not and could not exist, as will be seen at large in the following sections. And if the reader will only be at the trouble to apply all the arguments which they draw from the perfections of God to these two facts, he will find, in general, that they are as conclusive against one, or both of them, as against the endless duration of future punishment.

The Universalists, in common with their opponents, appeal to revelation ; they profess to respect its authority ; they ought, therefore, to be satisfied with its decision. We may be mistaken in our reasonings and conjectures, but what God has said must be true. If the divine word be in their favour, I will not pretend to oppose to it the divine attributes ; and should it appear that God has pronounced punishment to be eternal, I think I have already proved, beyond a doubt, that his attributes do not contradict it. To the law, then, and to the testimony.

SECTION II.

ON THE WISDOM, POWER, AND GOODNESS OF GOD.

“As God is the first cause of all,” says Mr. Vidler, “it is consistent with reason that he should seek the happiness of all his creatures, and that whatever the goodness of God hath willed, and his wisdom planned, that his power will execute.”

Mr. Fisher, in reply, observed, “If God, as you affirm, should seek the happiness of all his creatures, and his power will accomplish what his wisdom planned and his goodness willed ; we ask how it came to pass that there should be so much evil and misery in the world as there confessedly is. And if it have not yet been the case, that the power of God hath co-operated with his will, effectually to prevent the entrance of sin and its consequent evils into the world, how doth it appear from a consideration of the divine attributes only, as they have been already exercised in the government of the world, that his power will finally accomplish what his goodness wills, respecting the happiness of all his creatures ? Why not then prevent them from being miserable at all ? As God is infinitely good, and infinitely powerful, he must be too good to will the existence of sin, and too powerful not to be able to prevent it.”

This was a blow at the root, and Mr. V. felt its force. “If I understand this paragraph aright,” says he, “it implies, either,—

“1. That my premises are wrong, and that God is not infinitely wise, powerful, and good, but that he is either weak, foolish, or wicked, or all of it ; or,—

“2. Though he be infinitely wise, powerful, and good, that he has willed bad things, planned foolish things, and executed them ; or,—

“3. That he has willed good things, planned wise things, but is disappointed in the execution of them ; or,—

“4. Though the divine character be infinitely wise,

powerful, and good, and that whatever his goodness willed, and his wisdom planned, his power will execute; yet that we know nothing about it, but are left in total ignorance of it.

“But if neither of these can be granted, then my inference from the divine perfections remains in full force.”*

What pitiful shuffling is this! Mr. V. does not deny that his argument is as conclusive against the introduction of sin and misery, as against their endless continuance; and yet he will not give it up.

There is such a striking resemblance between this argument, and that urged by Epicurus against divine providence, that a person may be almost tempted to think the one was borrowed from the other. “Either God is willing,” says this philosopher, “to remove evils, and not able, or able and not willing, or neither able nor willing. If he be willing and not able, he is impotent, which cannot be applied to the Deity. If he be able and not willing, he is envious, which is equally inconsistent with the nature of God. If he be neither willing nor able, he is both envious and impotent, and consequently no God. If he be both willing and able, which is the only thing that answers to the notion of a God, from whence come evils? or why does he not remove them?”†

If Mr. V.’s reasoning be just, it is easy to see that Epicurus’s inference is the most natural. For if God in his goodness seeks the happiness of all his creatures; if his wisdom contrives a way in which they may be made happy; and if his power must execute the plan devised by his wisdom; then it must necessarily follow, that evil must immediately cease, or rather never could have existed. But this is contrary to matter of fact: we must therefore infer that there is no providence. Mr. V., as a christian minister, cannot admit this conclusion; he must therefore abandon the ground on which it rests.

* God’s Love to his Creatures, pp. 12—15.

† King’s Origin of Evil, p. 484, 3rd edit.

But I need not try to cut this knot ; I can untie it very readily with the aid of the doctrine of moral liberty. On this principle I can deny his inference, without admitting any one of his implications. In all the divine dispensations in relation to man, God has an eye to his free agency, and will not destroy it. Misery entered with the abuse of liberty ; and the possibility of this abuse being continued, militates against the certainty of the restoration in question ; for to say that a man endowed with liberty to sin, must necessarily be virtuous, is a contradiction in terms. I say, then, in reply both to Epicurus and Mr. V., that the introduction of misery, and its endless continuance, are owing to an abuse of moral liberty in man, and not to any deficiency in the wisdom, or power, or goodness of God.

If Mr. V. should deny the doctrine of moral liberty, his difficulties will be increased rather than diminished. For if God has made men necessary agents, he is the author of evil. There can be no more propriety in charging it upon them, on this supposition, than there would be in charging my pen, rather than myself, with the errors contained in this book. Mr. V. would, therefore, have to inform us, how infinite holiness could be the author of sin, and infinite happiness the author of misery.

Mr. Wright confidently asserts, that " what is said about free will by no means involves the restitution in uncertainty ; for though God will ever treat his creatures as free, intelligent beings, yet they will never become independent of him, or of his government ; nor will he suffer his counsel to be overturned, and his designs to be defeated by the machinations of the enemy."*

It is true that sinners will never become independent of the government of God ; but it is as true that they are now dependent, and that they are now miserable ; and if present dependence does not provide against present misery, then neither does eternal dependence against eternal misery. But " he will not suffer his

* Examination of Dr. Ryland's Sermon, p. 46.

counsel to be overturned, nor his designs to be defeated." I wish to know whether God has any counsels or designs respecting the happiness of his intelligent creatures, which are not connected with virtue. Can they be made happy, without being previously made holy? Mr. W. will say, no. It will follow then, that if God's counsels and designs respecting their happiness cannot be defeated, his counsels and designs respecting their holiness cannot be defeated. Now to come to matter of fact: God designs that men should be virtuous in this life; but thousands defeat those designs by obstinate perseverance in iniquity. The inference is, that God's counsels and designs respecting their happiness are defeated; and if this may be the case for an age, it may be so forever.

SECTION III.

ON THE JUSTICE OF GOD.

"DIVINE justice," says Mr. Weaver, "is that perfection in God, by which he endeavours continually to make all intelligences just."* If God endeavours continually to make all sinful creatures just, it is reasonable to suppose that there must, by this time, be some notable change for the better wrought in satan and his angels; but the experience of the saints fully contradicts it: perhaps those endeavours are very feeble.

Mr. Wright says, "With respect to satan and his angels, they have never experienced their proper punishment, but are reserved under chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; of course we ought not to be at all surprised that their punishment has not had its effect before they are fully subjected to it."†

It is granted that they do not experience that severity of punishment which is reserved for them; but it is cer-

* Endless Misery Overthrown, p. 9.

† Examination of Ryland's Sermon, pp. 48, 49.

tain their misery is great. According to the constitution of nature, there is no peace to the wicked ; they are like the troubled sea ; the disorder of their minds must render them wretched ; and, in addition to this, they are represented as being confined in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. If Mr. W. were confined in a dark dungeon, laden with irons, oppressed with guilty fears, tormented with unholy passions and appetites, and looking forward to the assizes under the assurance of being then punished in the most severe and exemplary manner, I dare say he would feel himself to be extremely miserable. And if the fallen angels may be very wretched for thousands of years, without being in the least reformed, I think we are warranted in saying, that God does not endeavour continually to make them just by their sufferings ; or else that he endeavours to do it in vain ; either of which is inconsistent with the doctrine of their restoration.*

Mr. Wright “ offers some remarks upon the nature of divine justice. I do not,” says he, “ conceive the justice of God to consist in inexorable severity of conduct, in his taking all possible advantages of the errors and follies of mortals.”† And pray, sir, who have such conceptions ? What necessity was there for this remark ? But wherein does it consist ? “ In the undeviating rectitude of his nature and conduct ; in his rendering to every creature that which is most consistent with his own perfections ; in his doing, in every case, that which is most right to be done by infinite wisdom,

* It is rather surprising that the Universalists have not adopted Dr. Priestley's sentiment, to get rid of this difficulty. The doctor roundly asserts, “ That there is such a person as the devil, is no part of my faith, nor that of many other christians ; nor am I sure that it was the belief of any of the christian writers. Neither do I believe the doctrine of demoniacal possessions, whether it was believed by the sacred writers or not ; and yet my unbelief in these articles does not affect my faith in the great facts of which the evangelists were eye and ear witnesses. They might not be competent judges in the one case, though perfectly so with respect to the other.”—*Moses and the Hindoos Compared*, p. 341.

† Examination of Ryland's Sermon, p. 34.

power, and goodness, for the preservation of eternal order throughout the universe.”* I shall show presently, that this definition and endless punishment are perfectly reconcilable; in the mean time I will proceed to another of Mr. W.’s remarks. “I remark that Dr. Ryland’s conclusion, ‘If the restitution take place on the foundation of grace, and through the mediation of Christ, then the justice of eternal punishment it is admitted,’ evidently implies, that grace cannot operate without arresting the arm of justice, and that what Christ effects through his mediation, stops the course of justice.”† The doctor’s conclusion implies that there may be justice without grace, but not that there cannot be grace without injustice; the proof, therefore, “that God, in dispensing his favours, acts with the strictest justice,” was unnecessary.

Mr. W. goes on: “I think Dr. R.’s mistake arises from his supposing that the justice of God consists in his giving to every one of those who die in their sins, according to the strict demerit of their conduct; this is not to be concluded from the declaration, ‘Who will render to every one according to their deeds.’”‡ If it cannot be concluded from this text, it may from the following: Matthew v. 26; xviii. 23, 35; Luke xii. 10, 58, 59; Hebrews x. 26—29; James ii. 13. If sinners may be cast into the prison of hell, in the Almighty’s debt, to remain there till they pay all that is due unto him, to the uttermost farthing, and the very last mite, although they have not to pay it with; if they may so blaspheme the Holy Ghost, that they shall not be forgiven; if they may commit sin of such magnitude that the sacrifice of Christ remains no more for them, and that their certain portion will be fiery indignation; and if they will have judgment without mercy; then I think it is sufficiently evident, that they will receive according to the strict demerit of their crimes, and that the demerit thereof is eternal damnation.

But, “if divine justice required that sinners should

* Examination, p. 34. † Ibid., p. 35. ‡ Ibid., p. 37.

receive according to their demerits, it could not be an act of justice to pardon the guilty. It cannot well be denied, either, that divine justice does not require the endless punishment of sinners, or that God will, in divers instances, fail to do what his justice requires."* This is such childish quibbling, that one would wonder a man of sense should have recourse to it. Mr. W. knows that believers only are pardoned; he ought, therefore, to have stated it thus: "If divine justice required that those who die in unbelief should receive according to their demerits, it could not be an act of justice to pardon those who are obedient to the faith." Now, who does not perceive the futility of this reasoning? According to Mr. W.'s logic, it is easy to see that he himself is under a mistake, if he suppose that divine justice requires any future punishment. For, "if divine justice required that sinners should receive any future punishment, it could not be an act of justice to pardon the guilty in this life. It cannot well be denied, either that divine justice does not require any future punishment, or that God will in divers instances fail to do what his justice requires." How well qualified is Mr. W. to point out the mistakes of others! I believe that neither he, nor any other man, will undertake to prove, that it would be unjust in God to punish those who die in sin, according to the strict demerit of their conduct.

"I will inquire," says Mr. W., "if we have any proof that eternal punishment would be just? If it would be just, I know of but three ways in which the justice of it can be discoverable by us:—

"1. From its being perceivable, by reason, that the demerit of sin is unbounded; and, consequently, that it is reasonable to conclude, that the sinner ought, in justice, to be punished with inexpressible torments to all eternity; but to assert this, would be to contradict the most evident facts, the clearest perceptions of the human mind, that man is a creature whose powers are

* Examination, pp. 37, 38.

limited, consequently, whose virtues and vices must be limited; that there are degrees in sin, and ought, in justice, to be degrees in punishment. The reason which God hath given us must revolt at the idea of the crimes of a few years, perhaps of a few days, being punished with the most exquisite misery, so long as God himself exists. Such a doctrine outrages all our feelings."*

I will not undertake to prove, merely by unassisted reason, that punishment must be eternal, since the question involves in it the consideration of a variety of subjects, too deep for the most penetrating human mind to develop, without the aid of divine revelation: it will be quite sufficient to show that punishment may be eternal. But it seems, "the most evident facts, and the clearest perceptions of the human mind," are against its possibility. We may inquire, however, what those facts and perceptions are. Why, one is, "The powers of man are limited." Very well; and what then? "Consequently, his virtues and vices must be limited." This is not so clear a perception as the former. A man may injure his body to such a degree, by cutting off an arm, or plucking out an eye, that nothing in the material world could make it perfect again; and since Mr. W. will allow that the soul may be injured, he cannot be sure that the injury may not be so great, in some cases, that nothing in the spiritual world can restore it to its former state. So that if man's powers be limited, yet the effects of his vices may be infinite. As to man's virtues, I think even the Universalists will allow that they are not limited in their effects. It will not be pretended to be contrary either to reason or revelation, that a man who has lived virtuously in this world should be happy forever hereafter; and Mr. W., I dare say, thinks it is not contrary to reason, that the restored should have a degree of bliss inferior to that of the saved."† It cannot, therefore, be denied, that the virtues performed by our limited powers in this life, are

* Examination, pp. 31, 32.

† Ibid., p. 44.

the cause of our enjoying a degree of happiness forever, which happiness, without those virtues, we should be deprived of. And if the effects of virtue may be happiness, infinite in duration, then, for anything which our reason can perceive to the contrary, the effects of vice may be misery, infinite in duration also.

But, "there are degrees in sin, and ought, in justice, to be degrees in punishment. Reason revolts at the idea of the crimes of a few years, perhaps of a few days, being punished forever." Mr. W. here pleads for two rules of proportion; first, between the degrees of sin and the degrees of punishment; second, between the time of sinning and the time of suffering. To the first I have no objection; for it is as easy to suppose the degree of punishment in hell to be proportioned to the degree of moral pravity in sinners, though the duration of punishment be endless, as it is to suppose the degree of glory in heaven to be proportioned to the degree of moral virtue in the saints, whose happiness Mr. W. believes will be eternal. Now, before I proceed to the other rule, I wish to ask Mr. W. whether a sinner will receive twenty degrees of punishment for ten degrees of sin. I know Mr. W. will revolt at such an idea; he will plead for an equal proportion; ten degrees of punishment, for ten degrees of sin. I beg leave, then, to remind him, that reason requires his second rule should be calculated in an equal proportion also: thus, for ten years' sin, a man ought to receive ten years of punishment. I know Mr. W. will not plead for an equal proportion being applied to his second rule; but I know also, that any reason which he can assign for a different proportion will serve to overturn the rule. Should he say that a longer season of suffering is necessary to restrain sin, by operating as a warning to others; I then answer, that the duration of suffering is not proportioned to the time of sinning, but to the restraint necessary to be laid upon sinners; and since Mr. W. cannot show that the threatening of everlasting punishment is more than a necessary warning, he cannot show that justice does not require end-

less misery. If he say that a longer term of suffering is necessary, to correct the moral pravity of sinners; then I reply again, that the duration of punishment is not proportioned to the time of sinning, but to the strength of sin; and as we have seen above, that the wound which sin gives to the soul may be incurable, it follows that punishment may be eternal.

Once more: "Such a doctrine outrages all our feelings." True; but that is no new thing. Criminals are often outrageous under their sufferings, though, according to the reason of sober men, they are not too severe. The damned are outrageous enough, God knows! They are represented as gnashing their teeth with rage. But, if our feelings are to settle the controversy, why does Mr. W. appeal to our reason?

My reason leads me to the following reflections upon the subject: suppose a man to live in sin for "three-score years and ten," and then to go into another world; since he continually abused his mercies in this world, it is just that they should be diminished, if not withheld, in the next. Among the chief of our mercies, we place our religious advantages: justice would, therefore, require a diminution of these. But, if he went into the other world more sinful than he came into this, and if he there enjoyed fewer helps to virtue than when here, it is not only possible, but extremely probable, if not morally certain, that he would grow worse and worse. But his mercies might justly be diminished in proportion to his abuse of them. He might, therefore, sin them all away, and so be forever unholy: and since we perceive that, by the constitution of nature, sin and misery are inseparably connected together, he must, in such a case, be eternally miserable.

"2. If the justice of eternal punishment be discoverable by us, it must be by our perceiving that some principle exists in the Deity, which will render consistent with his character, the infliction of infinite punishment upon his offending creatures, for finite offences. But, from what part of his works, or of his word, can we perceive that such a principle exists in God? To im-

pute infinite vindictiveness and implacability to the Father of Mercies, who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works, and who will ever be what he is, seeing he is incapable of changing, would be to suppose him transformed into the veriest monster in this universe.”*

If God cannot punish sinners forever without being infinitely vindictive and implacable, then he cannot punish them for an age, without being for that age vindictive and implacable; but, if God be also incapable of changing, and will ever be what he is, then he must either punish sin forever, or not at all.

Mr. W. proceeds: “To assert that it will comport with that justice which emanates from him who is love, for him to be infinitely revengeful, and glut his vindictive fury with the inexpressible miseries of his rational offspring, so long as himself exists; that infinite wisdom will please itself with breaking a fly upon the wheel to all eternity, would be to belie everything which God hath been graciously pleased to reveal concerning himself, and to utter the grossest possible libel upon him who is worthy of universal adoration and praise.”†

I think it would be scarcely possible to utter a grosser libel upon God than to assert, that he could be pleased with breaking a fly upon the wheel for a day. If we can think, therefore, that the cases of the innocent fly and of obstinate sinners are parallel, we may very safely infer that sinners ought not to be punished, either in this world or in that which is to come. It is rather remarkable, that Mr. W. has kept guilt and depravity out of sight in this paragraph. Perhaps he might think an erroneous and a passionate address to the feelings of his readers would answer his purpose better than a fair statement of the fact, and calm argument.

I think we may “perceive that some principle exists in the Deity which will render consistent with his character the infliction of infinite punishment.” Mr. W. “conceives that the justice of God consists in his doing,

* Examination, p. 32.

† Ibid., pp. 32, 33.

in every case, that which is most right to be done by infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, for the preservation of eternal order throughout the universe." And again, p. 35: "Justice is the rectitude of infinite wisdom and goodness." Now I am not without hope that I can reconcile infinite punishment with this representation. Mr. W. must recollect that the goodness of God is the goodness of a sovereign, and that the Almighty, as well as every good legislator, in framing laws for the government of his subjects, has an eye to their good, considered as a body politic.* To give energy to those laws, they must have sanctions annexed to them. The penal sanctions operate as warnings. (See Rom. xi. 20, 21; 1 Cor. x. 5—11; Jude 5—7.) Thus they tend to preserve order, and thereby to promote the general good. And since the influence of the threatenings will be in proportion to their magnitude, it must be perfectly consistent with the goodness of God, to lay as great a restraint upon sin as possible, consistent with moral liberty; and if the promise of everlasting happiness be not inconsistent with it, then neither is the threatening of everlasting misery.†

* "Justice can be no otherwise considered than as goodness toward moral agents, regulated in its exercise by wisdom; or, as wisely, and in the most proper manner pursuing, not the private and separate, but the united good of all intelligent beings."—ABERNETHY *On the Attributes*, vol. ii., p. 183.

That celebrated infidel, Lord Shaftesbury, could perceive this truth. "If," says he, "there be a general mind, it can have no particular interest; but the general good, or good of the whole, and its own private good, must of necessity be one and the same. It can intend nothing besides, nor aim at anything beyond, nor be provoked to anything contrary."—*Characteristics*, vol. i., p. 40.

† Archbishop King has a fine remark upon this subject: "Since God," says he, "has undertaken to conduct and preserve an almost infinite multitude of thinking beings to all eternity, through all the changes and successions of things, in as great a degree of happiness as possible, without violence done to elections; where is the wonder if he leave a few to the misery which they brought upon themselves, thereby to give the rest a warning how much they ought to stand upon their guard against the like? And since these punishments may be conceived to promote the good of the whole, they may arise from the goodness of the Deity."—*Origin of Evil*, p. 505.

It is generally agreed, that the good of the public requires that some particular transgressors should be cut off forever from civil society. And if this be no argument against the goodness of human legislators, why should it be thought inconsistent with the goodness of divine justice, that some individual sinners should be cut off forever from the society of heaven.*

It will perhaps be objected, that though human legislators cannot, in all cases, devise modes of punishment which may at the same time be warnings to society and corrective to the sufferers, yet it cannot be impossible with God to do it. I answer, that our business is not so much with what God can do, as what he hath done, and will do. Now the sacred scriptures are decisive upon this subject. We do not perceive how the destruction of the old world, of the inhabitants of Sodom, etc., could be effected with a view to their reformation; we might as well suppose that a man is gibbeted to make him an useful member of society. When wicked professors are threatened with "strong delusion," (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12,) it is not with a view to their reformation, but their damnation. When sinners are punished, in consequence of having neglected their day of visitation, God does not intend their reformation and happiness, because they will then call upon him in vain. (Prov. i. 24—28; Matt. xxv. 10—12; Luke xiii. 24—28.

It has sometimes been asserted, that the consideration of limited punishment is quite sufficient to determine every reasonable being on the side of virtue. The above contains a sufficient reply to this assertion;

* "God is to be considered under the character of a moral governor, and therefore, in order to prove his goodness, he must consult, not so much the happiness of any particular person, as what may, upon the whole, be for the benefit of all that moral kingdom over which he presides, and may at the same time suit the majesty and honour of his government: now, for anything we certainly know, the everlasting misery of some sinful creatures may be the most effectual means of answering these ends in harmony with each other."—DODDRIDGE'S *Lectures*, vol. ii., p. 472, 4th edition.

but it may not be amiss to remark further, that the happiness arising from the practice of virtue, both in this life and that which is to come, ought to determine the choice of every reasonable and accountable being, though there were no future punishment at all. Shall we, then, infer that warnings are unnecessary? This would be to reflect on the wisdom of God in employing them. We must, therefore, infer what is true in fact, that men do not always follow the dictates of reason; and that they are sometimes carried away by the violence of corrupt passions and appetites. And hence we cannot be sure that the threatening of endless punishment is not necessary to counteract the influence of our depravity. Certainly, when we consider the influence of sinful habits and examples, we cannot possibly suppose, that they are likely to be counteracted by the threatening, or rather promise of punishment, which is corrective in its nature, moderate in its quantity, limited in its duration, and glorious in its end.

“3. If the justice of eternal punishment be discoverable by us, it must be from God’s having pointed it out as the wages of sin, and threatened sinners with it in the scriptures. The scriptures declare the wages of sin to be death, not an endless life of torment; that the soul that sinneth shall die, not live in misery to all eternity.*

An advocate for annihilation might have made these reflections, without exciting much surprise; but, for such a comment to come from the pen of an Universalist, is truly wonderful; for, if the death threatened be opposed to existence, it is as true that there will be no restoration, as that punishment will not be eternal. Death is not always opposed to existence, because some are dead while they live. (1 Tim. v. 6.) Mr. W. must believe that the death threatened is a life of torment, or he must retract what he has written about “hell being inexpressibly more dreadful than the most racking pains human nature is capable of bearing in

* Examination, p. 33.

the present state ;''* and since there is no promise of deliverance from the torment, annexed to the threatening, there is no ground for hope that the punishment will have an end. And here I will take occasion to remark, that in the representations which the scriptures give of the decision of the last day, not a single hint is dropped about limited and corrective punishment ; yet no season could be so proper for that purpose. We might have expected that the Judge would exhort them to profit speedily by these necessary and wholesome correctives, that they might the sooner be restored to that happiness which he was so anxious they should enjoy. Divine judgments in this life, when designed to be corrective, have usually been accompanied with exhortations, promises, etc. But not a word of this sort is found in the final sentence of the supreme Judge. It is rather remarkable that Mr. W. has not examined any more of the threatenings : perhaps he did not think it safe to venture far upon this dangerous ground. The threatenings which point out eternal punishment as the wages of sin, are brought forward and defended by Mr. Fuller, in his Letters to Mr. Vidler, to which I refer the reader.

We have just cause of complaint against the Universalists, for representing us as imputing to the Almighty a bosom enflamed with rage and boiling with vengeance, when he executes judgment on impenitent sinners. He assures us that he taketh no pleasure in the death of a sinner. It is no unusual sight to see an earthly judge, with tears in his eyes, pronouncing upon the criminal the sentence of condemnation. And if the human mind may be entirely free from rage and vengeance on such an occasion, why should we ascribe these wicked passions to the Deity ? But such a representation serves their purpose.

Examination, p. 16.

SECTION IV.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

“As God is love,” says Mr. Wright, “he never can act towards any creature, at any time, but from a principle of love. If it be admitted that God once loved all his creatures, how can it be proved that he will ever cease to love them? If his love be himself; if he be incorruptible, unchangeable, without variableness, or shadow of turning; how can he ever cease to love those whom he once loved? To suppose the love of God to any of his creatures may become extinct, is, in effect, to suppose that so much of himself may become extinct, for he is love; that he may so far vary and change; which is impossible. The sins of men cannot destroy the love of God to them, for the reasons already alleged. Notwithstanding all their sins, he hath given the fullest demonstration of the continuance of his love to them, in giving his well-beloved Son to die for them, as sinners. If God will never cease to love all his creatures, it follows, that he will never cease to desire their happiness. And if what his soul desireth should never take place, would it not prove either a deficiency in his wisdom or in his power?”*

The above reasoning will apply against the introduction of misery, with exactly the same force as against its endless continuance. For if God never can act towards any creature, at any time, but from a principle of love; if this be accompanied with desires for their happiness; and if his wisdom and his power are engaged to fulfil his desires; then it must necessarily follow, that it is impossible for any creature, at any time, to be unhappy. As this conclusion cannot be admitted, the premises must be given up.

I do not very well understand what Mr. W. means by the phrase, “If his love be himself.” Does he sup-

* Hints on the Restoration, pp. 4, 5.

pose that love is not merely an attribute of God, but the divine substance, essence, or nature, as some German enthusiasts have wildly imagined? From some parts of the preceding paragraph, one would think he has entertained such an idea. It is not countenanced, however, by the phrase, "God is love;" for it is also written, "God is a spirit," "God is light," etc. Now, if we may say with propriety, love is God, we may likewise affirm, spirit is God, light is God, etc. By this method of interpreting scripture, we may soon have as many gods as the heathens had, and with natures as opposite to each other.

Mr. W. urges the immutability of the divine nature as a proof that the love of God to his creatures cannot become extinct; for, says he, "to suppose the love of God to any of his creatures may become extinct, is, in effect, to suppose that so much of himself may become extinct, for he is love; that he may, so far, vary and change; which is impossible." According to this logic, we may prove, not only that the love of God to his creatures cannot become extinct, but also that it cannot vary: for "to suppose a diminution of the love of God to any of his creatures, is to suppose a diminution of himself, for he is love; that he may so far vary and change; which is impossible." And again, "to suppose an increase of the love of God to any of his creatures, is to suppose an increase of himself, for he is love; that he may so far vary and change; which is impossible." From hence it follows, that the love of God to his creatures has no relation to their moral characters, but that he loves the devils as much now, as he did when they were angels of light, doing his pleasure; and that he has the same love to a murderer while he is imbruing his hands in the blood of the innocent, as he has to a saint while zealously employed in the practice of piety and virtue.

The love of God is displayed in concert with his other perfections, and is never indulged to an extent that would hinder their harmonious operation. God is light, or holiness, as well as love; his love, therefore,

cannot be inconsistent with his holiness. Mr. W. will allow that God loved the angels with delight before they sinned : but to say that his love to them was the same after they sinned, is, in other words, to say, that he taketh pleasure in unrighteousness, which is inconsistent with his holiness, and which is the damning sin of men. (2 Thess. ii. 12.) It must, therefore, be granted that God's love of complacence towards his creatures becomes extinct with the extinction of virtue in them; and this spoils Mr. W.'s argument.*

Mr. W. thinks that "the sins of men cannot destroy the love of God to them, because he hath demonstrated his love to them in giving his Son to die for them, as sinners." I grant that God loves sinners, but not as sinners; for that would be to love sin, which is perfectly contrary to his nature. It is no crime of ours that we come into the world with a sinful nature, and therefore it is not so wonderful that our being in such a state did not hinder God from loving us, and sending his Son to bring us to holiness and glory. For we cannot well suppose that a God of love would bring a race of rational beings into existence without affording them the means of virtue and happiness. But to infer from thence, that those who only abuse these means, instead of improving them, must still continue to be the objects of God's gracious regard, is a conclusion which the premises do not warrant.

The bounds of that love which was manifested in the gift of Christ, are fixed in the New Testament: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) I wish to know by what authority Mr. W. extends it to obstinate un-

* "God loves his creatures beyond the love of the tenderest and most compassionate father; but always with this one exception, that he loves virtue, righteousness, and goodness still better than them. And against no sort of sinners do the scriptures speak with greater indignation of severity, than against those who presumptuously make the goodness of God an occasion of sinning, and turn even the grace of God itself into wantonness."—CLARK'S *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 219, 7th edition.

believers and devils. It is a consideration calculated to excite our warmest gratitude, that, "when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" yet if we continue to oppose his gracious designs concerning us, the time may arrive when "he that made us will not have mercy on us, and he that formed us, will show us no favour." (Isaiah xxvii. 11.)

Dr. Ryland charged the Universalists with taking off an infinite weight from our motives against sin. To this Mr. Wright replied, that "the most powerful motive to obedience is the strongest motive against sin; that love is the only genuine principle of obedience; and that the government of God is not the reign of terror."*

The dispute is not about the strongest motive against sin; for, supposing love to operate most powerfully, it may still be true that the Universalists take off an infinite weight from our motives against sin, by destroying the force of the threatenings: and this Mr. W. has done by asserting that love is the only principle of obedience, and by excluding terror from the government of God.

Mr. W. proceeds to the proof. "Why do sinners continue in rebellion against God? Because they have no inclination to obey him. Because they do not love him. Why do they not love him? Because they are strangers to his love; if they saw his loveliness and perceived his love to them, they certainly would love and obey him. Can they be brought to love and obey God by having their minds inspired with tormenting fear?"† In reply to the whole, I observe:—

1. Love is not the only genuine principle of obedience. Noah was moved with fear to build the ark. (Heb. xi. 7.) Jesus Christ inculcates the same principle upon his disciples: "Fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." Though love may be allowed to be

* Examination, p. 18.

† Ibid.

the most noble principle, yet fear will appear to be equally necessary, when we consider the nature of man, and the circumstances in which he is placed.

2. The government of God is the reign of terror, to the finally impenitent; and the consideration of it is urged as a motive against sin. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (2 Cor. v. 11.)

3. If sinners saw God's loveliness, and perceived his love to them, they certainly would not all love and obey him, if we may judge of the future by the past: "because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God." (Rom. i. 21.) The Jews certainly perceived the amiableness of the divine character, and his particular regard for their welfare, by a long train of gracious providences in their favour; and yet, as a nation, they did not love and obey him. The apostle Paul also speaks of some who despise the riches of divine goodness, and harden their hearts against it. (Rom. ii. 4, 5.) If all men must be brought to virtue by a sight of God's loveliness, and of his love to them, and only that will bring them to it, what end can be answered by future punishment, that is even limited in its duration? And why does not God make the discovery to them now? If they cannot be brought to love and obey God, by having their minds inspired with the tormenting fear of punishment, can it be done by the infliction of punishment? Why then are they punished at all? The fact is, that, in his zeal against endless punishment, Mr. W. has lost sight of both corrective and limited punishment, though they are the two chief corner stones of his spiritual building. But I have proved above, that the terror of the Lord supplies a motive against sin: this motive is of infinite weight when urged by an anti-universalist; this motive, however, Mr. W. has neglected: we are therefore justified in charging him with taking off an infinite weight from our motives against sin.

But Mr. W. undertakes to show, that the charge properly belongs to his opponent's system. "That system," says he, "which throws a thick veil over God's infinite loveliness, by representing him as infinitely wrathful

and vindictive, is the system which takes off an infinite weight from our motives against sin, by diminishing, beyond calculation, the most powerful motives to obedience."*

One would think that no man in his senses would be hardy enough to affirm that we take off an infinite weight from the motives against sin, by representing God as threatening to punish it forever; yet this is done under the pretence, that the motive drawn from the love of God is diminished in the same proportion that vice is punished: but if it were so, Mr. W.'s consequence would not follow; it would only prove, that one motive is weakened as another is strengthened; so that, upon the whole, there would be no diminution of their weight against sin. But the motive drawn from the love of God is not diminished at all by the threatening of eternal punishment. On the ground of divine love, we teach that glory, inconceivable in degree, and eternal in duration, will be the reward of obedience. Mr. W. cannot possibly make this motive stronger; and while he continues to reject the other, he must not be offended if we continue to prefer our charge against him.

I know that in his pamphlet, Mr. W. speaks of future punishment as a motive against sin; but it is also certain that in the above paragraph he disavows it; and it is no part of my business to reconcile his contradictions. Should he, however, allow that future punishment supplies us with a motive against sin, he must recollect, that the strength of the motive will be in proportion to the duration of the punishment: this motive will therefore be infinitely stronger when urged by those who hold the doctrine of endless punishment, than when urged by the advocates for its limited duration.

It is a question of vast importance, and which, I fear, ministers in general do not sufficiently attend to, whether the love or the terror of God operates most powerfully at first on the minds of sinners. If they were

* Examination, p. 19.

governed by their reason, there would be no necessity to preach the terror of the Lord to them ; because, as soon as they perceived that their interest and duty are united, they would begin to promote the one by the practice of the other ; but he must have a very superficial acquaintance with men, who does not know that, in general, they are governed by their corrupt passions and appetites, in opposition to the dictates of reason and religion. The privileges of religion will never operate on corrupt minds so as to move them to practise its duties. Tell them about the comforts of the Spirit, the sweets of communion with God in religious exercises and the happiness of heaven ;—as consisting in the vision of God, and the society of saints, angels, and Jesus Christ ;—in investigating the works and ways of God ;—in singing his praises, and in loving and serving him for evermore ;—I say, tell them of these things ; yet still, as they have no dispositions to enjoy them, they will express no desires after them. You might as well cast pearls before swine. The temper of their minds must be changed, before such motives will have any influence upon them.*

A minister can have no hope of success till he has made sinners sensible of their state. "The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." "Jesus Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Let him tell them of their danger ; that upon their present conduct depends their everlasting condition ; that if they die in sin they will be "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing their teeth, in unquenchable fire forever ;" that they have no security against the arrest death ; that hell may now be "moved from beneath to

* "Since the pleasure of anything results from the agreement between it and the desire, what satisfaction can spiritual enjoyments give unto a carnal mind ? Alas ! what delight would it be to the swine to be wrapt in fine linen and laid in odours ? His senses are not gratified by any such delicacies ; nor would he feel any thing besides the torment of being withheld from the mire. And as little complacency would a brutish soul find in those pure and refined pleasures, which can only upbraid, not satisfy him."—*Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety*, chap. i.

meet them at their coming ;"—let him, I say, sound these awful truths in their ears with the energy of a man alarmed at their dreadful condition, and some, at least, will begin to see their danger, flee from the wrath to come, and inquire what they must do to be saved.* Then is the time to unfold the love of God to them. It will inspire them with hope and devotion. In answer to prayer they will obtain pardoning mercy; a consciousness of that mercy will fill them with love; and then every passion, appetite, and power of their minds, will unite to impel them forward in the paths of piety and virtue.

I will now inquire whether the scriptures favour the idea that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of religion. Jesus Christ addressed the fears of daring sinners: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Paul alarmed the fears of Felix; for while "he reasoned on righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled;" and though the apostle did not succeed in his design, yet no one will question the propriety of the method which he adopted in order to attain it. The three thousand that were converted on the day of pentecost, were moved with fear: "They were pricked in their hearts, and said, men and brethren, what shall we

* "God lays hold on that powerful principle of self-preservation within us to oblige us, by any means, to be good, wise, and happy; and if the love of goodness, wisdom, and happiness cannot prevail, (as they cannot possibly, in the nature of things, at first, over habitual sinners,) to drive us into that good he intends for us, and compel us to come in, through fear of the dread punishments of the contrary practices. Therefore he has, in his great wisdom and goodness, positively acquainted us with those endless unendurable torments, to rouse us out of that desperate inconsideration and lethargy, infatuation and insensibility, which are incident to an habit of sinning. That since the impenitent sinner must one day suffer them in reality, he might every day think of and suffer them in his thoughts, till the pain thereof changes the course of his life; and then, in a few days, he will surely turn and repent, and precipitate himself into virtue and happiness, taking sanctuary in the fear of God, in order to rejoice in the arms of his favour."
—*Cure of Deism*, vol. i., pp. 319, 320, 3rd edit.

do?" The Philippian jailor "came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Examples might be multiplied, but it is unnecessary. It is evident that religion generally begins with fear. And should a minister neglect to address this passion, by leaving out the terror of the Lord, he may preach the love of God, the joys of heaven, moral virtue, or what he pleases, till his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth, without converting one sinner from the error of his ways.*

SECTION V.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

ON the supposition that some will be wretched for ever, Mr. Weaver remarks: "Jesus Christ could not intend to save such when he made them, because at that very time he knew they would not be saved. Now if he knew before he made them that they would not be saved, did he not make such for misery? If so, is he not the author of evil? And let such as maintain eternal misery get clear of it if they can."†

This reasoning will equally apply against limited punishment. "Jesus Christ could not intend to prevent such from being punished for a season when he made them, because at that very time he knew they would be punished for a season. Now if he knew before he made them that they would be thus punished, did he not make such for misery? If so, is he not the author of evil? And let such as maintain limited misery get clear of it if they can."

It is suitable to our nature, and to the relations which subsist betwixt God and us, that he should exhort us to repentance, and promise us salvation on the terms of the gospel. And when he does this, to call in ques-

* This language is too strong; all that can be justly inferred from the premises laid down is, that he who omits to address the passion fear, will not turn so many from the error of their way.—EDIT.

† Free Thoughts, Preface, p. 25, 2nd edit.

tion the sincerity of his intention, and to charge him with being the author of sin, because he knew beforehand that some would not repent and receive the gospel, is not so much to disprove endless punishment, as to deny moral liberty to man, and to lead us to atheism, by representing the state of the moral world as inconsistent with the divine perfections. Dr. Clarke has well observed, "Whatever is in itself, and in the nature of things, reasonable to be done, it is fit should actually be done; and it is never the more nor the less reasonable, for things being known or not known beforehand. The reason of God's sending exhortations to wicked men, is not that he himself is ignorant what they will do, but that, upon their own account, it is reasonable they should be so exhorted; and if the thing be reasonable in itself, it cannot cease to be so, upon the account of foreknowledge."*

It is allowed Jesus Christ knew that some would be miserable. Mr. W. infers from this, that he made them for misery; and from this inference he concludes again, that Jesus Christ is the author of evil. Mr. W.'s way of drawing inferences goes to prove, as fully upon his own system as upon ours, that man is a necessary agent, and that God is the author of all his actions, both good and bad. Thus, God knew man would sin; God, therefore, made man for sin; God, therefore, is the author of sin. But things may be foreknown, without being predestinated. I foreknow that the sun will rise in the morning, and that both the sun and moon will be eclipsed a certain number of times the ensuing year; but I am not vain enough to think, that my knowledge is, in any sense, the cause of these events taking place.†

* Clarke's Sermons, vol. i., pp. 166, 167.

† "God foresees, or rather sees the actions of free agents, because they will be, not that they will be because he foresees them. If I see an object in a certain place, the veracity of my senses supposed, it is certain that object is there; but yet it cannot be said, it is there because I see it there, or that my seeing it there is the cause of its being there; but because it is there, therefore I see it there. It is the object that determines my sensation: and so in

The following argument, in reference to one of Mr. Benson's sermons on the day of judgment, is borrowed by Mr. Weaver from Petitpierre, on Divine Goodness : "Can we deny that the divine mind was perfectly acquainted with the use they would make of existence? and is it not true, that existence bestowed upon such terms, must be to the creature an infinite evil; and that the irresistible fiat which flung them into being, was the greatest evil that could possibly befall them; and this at a time when they could have no demerit, but were perfectly innocent? But I leave these insurmountable difficulties to Mr. Benson to determine, how an irresistible act, which produces infinite evil to innocent beings, is to be qualified."*

Whatever strength there is in this argument will return with equal force against the doctrine of limited misery. "Can we deny that the divine mind was perfectly acquainted with the use they would make of existence? And is it not true that existence bestowed upon such terms must be the greatest evil that could possibly befall them;† and this at a time when they could have no demerit, but were perfectly innocent? But I leave these insurmountable difficulties with Mr. W. Perhaps he is able to determine, how an irresistible act, which brings upon innocent beings the greatest evil that can possibly befall them, is to be qualified."

It is granted that God knew the use, or rather abuse, which the incorrigible would make of their existence. But it is inquired, whether "existence, bestowed upon such terms, be not to the creature an infinite evil?"

the other case, it is a future choice of a free agent that determines the prescience which yet may be infallibly true."—*Religion of Nature Delineated*, p. 102.

* *Free Thoughts*, p. 18.

† At first sight, some may think these expressions too strong; but it must be recollected that the Universalists contend, it would be inconsistent with the divine perfections, for God to punish sinners forever. And since God cannot possibly act inconsistently with his perfections, limited misery must be, according to the Universalists, the greatest evil that can possibly befall a creature.

Existence bestowed upon terms is what I do not understand. Mr. W., however, supposes that, upon our system, the existence of those who perish is bestowed upon them on the terms of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth forever ; and this, he thinks, is evident, because God knew, when he made them, they would come to that end. But it is demanded, in the name of common sense, whether everything which God foresees a man will do, or suffer, be a condition of his existence ? If so, a condition of Mr. W.'s existence was, that he should write in favour of the doctrine of restoration ; and a condition of mine was, that I should write against it. Pharaoh and his host had their existence bestowed on them, on the terms of following the Israelites, and of being drowned in the Red Sea ; and the inhabitants of Sodom had their existence upon the terms of committing iniquity with greediness, and of being destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven !

Mr. W. thinks the conduct of the Almighty, in giving existence to such as finally perish, "cannot be qualified," because "existence to such was the greatest evil that could possibly befall them ; and this at a time when they were perfectly innocent." If it were true that God brought the greatest evil upon innocent creatures, I would not undertake to justify his character. But this be far from the righteous Governor of the world, with whom we have to do. Existence, simply considered, is not an evil ; otherwise evil is essential to God, and every other being that exists ; but it is supposed to become an evil, in the case under consideration, on account of the misery which will be annexed to it. I answer, if misery change existence into an evil, it must do this after, and not before it is added to existence ; for neither the foreknowledge of God, nor anything else, can make that to operate as a cause of anything which has no being. Now, the misery of hell is not inflicted upon innocent, but upon guilty creatures. Existence, then, is not an evil to innocent beings ; and, therefore, Mr. W.'s wicked charge against the Almighty falls to the ground.

The grand question is stated by Dr. Chauncey, thus : " If God knew that some free agents would make themselves unhappy, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of his wisdom to prevent it, why did he create them ?" It is not supposed that any are created merely to display the sovereignty of the almighty Creator in the infliction of eternal torments : " This," as the pious and judicious Dr. Doddridge observes, " is of all incredible things, the most incredible." If no valuable end can be answered by their existence, no doubt but the goodness of the divine sovereignty would have been more fully displayed, had they never existed. But it has been shown, under Section III., that their punishment, by operating as a warning, is useful in reclaiming sinners, and in preserving the saints in their obedience. And it cannot be proved that any would have been saved without the influence of such warnings and examples. And now the question assumes a new form : whether it would have been better to suffer a part of the human race to bring upon themselves destruction, when divine Providence would make their fall the means of the stability and happiness of the rest ; or, not to give existence to the human race at all. This question is easily answered, on the supposition that a majority of the human race will be finally happy.* God may surely create as many orders of beings as he pleases, without any impeachment of his goodness, provided the sum of happiness in each exceeds the sum of misery.

Although an Universalist cannot deny me the right to assume, that only a very small proportion of the human race will finally perish, yet some professing christians, perhaps, may think this is going too far. Let the following considerations be attended to :—

* " If the permitting those few to smart under the effects of their ill choice were the very means and motive by which the rest were induced to make a good one; and perhaps all would be seduced, if not fixed in a right choice, by the terror of such examples; it would still be agreeable to Goodness to suffer them to make the choice, and feel the effects of it."—KING's *Origin of Evil*, Law's Note, p. 489.

1. At the lowest computation, at least a third part of the human race die under seven years of age. I feel no hesitation in saying, these all go to a place of happiness.*

2. It is probable there has been, in past ages, more religion than has been noticed by historians. Poverty, when not extreme, is favourable to piety. The higher orders of society possess the means of gratifying their corrupt propensities, and by repeated gratifications they are formed into habits, which, in many cases, become unconquerable; whereas the poor, through the indigence of their circumstances, are induced to subdue those inclinations which they cannot indulge, and to console themselves with the pleasures which religion affords. But private, silent virtue, such as that which dwells in the humble cottage, generally escapes the attention of the historian. He fills his pages with only accounts of despots, tyrants, prelates, dissensions in church and state, etc. To judge, therefore, of the state of religion, in any country, or in any age, by what historians in general have recorded, is like forming a judgment of the state of health in a kingdom by visiting an hospital.

3. Far more people, even in the present age, are living under the influence of religion, than is generally believed. Many are hid from public observation by their modesty and poverty. Virtue in many persons makes but little noise. The good prophet thought he had stood alone, when there were seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. It is very usual too, to attach a greater degree of importance to the opinions which are peculiar to certain sects, than in justice they deserve; hence, when we have seen, in other sects and parties of professing christians, a conduct corresponding with the precepts of the gospel,

* "We do not know that the greater part of mankind are eternally miserable. Perhaps all infants may be saved, and such universal virtue may hereafter prevail, for succeeding, and those very long-lived and fruitful generations, as shall turn the balance of number, even among the adult, on the side of religion and happiness."—DODDRIDGE'S *Lectures*, vol. ii., p. 473.

instead of exercising that charity which believeth and hopeth all things, we are employed in endeavouring to reconcile their conduct with hypocrisy ; which has led to the conclusion, that some persons, without grace, will go farther in the practice of morality, than others go with it. This sentiment tends to subvert the whole gospel system ; for if false principles will carry a man as far as true ones, and in some cases farther, it may very reasonably be demanded, wherefore then serveth the gospel ? If men would only put that favourable construction upon propriety of character which candour demands, many thousands would be considered as belonging to the household of faith, and the family of heaven, who are now looked upon as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise.

4. If, in addition to a third part of the human race, who die in their childhood, the many who pass into happiness unnoticed, from obscure situations in life, and the multitudes of pious people whom bigotry anathematizes as damnable heretics, we add all those who are pretty generally acknowledged to be the people of God, with all idiots, and the chief part of those who die between the age of seven and twelve, (and who can doubt but most of these are received to happiness after death ?) it will require no very great stretch of faith and charity to conclude, that hitherto a majority of the human race have attained to felicity in the eternal world. And, if we look forward, the prospect will brighten ; for,—

5. There is an age approaching, during which righteousness will be universal. “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah xi. 9.) The apostle John informs us, that the duration of that age will be a thousand years. The numbers which designate the duration of the reign of antichrist are almost universally allowed to be prophetic numbers, and that a day must be interpreted to mean a year. And why should the term of the Messiah’s reign be explained in a more rigid sense ?

Understand them both by the same rule of interpretation, and the duration of the age of righteousness will be 360,000 years. To strengthen this opinion, observe, (1.) That during that age the life of man will be protracted to near, if not quite, a thousand years. (See Isaiah lxxv. 20—22.) A person will be a child, that is, in the first stage of life, at the age of one hundred years. It is therefore no improbable conjecture, that, according to the regular course of nature, men will then live about a thousand years. It is also observed, "As the days of a tree, are the days of my people." Now, it is supposed by some historians and travellers, that some of the cedars of Lebanon have stood for nearly a thousand years. (2.) Several generations will pass away during that age. (See Psalm lxxii. 5; Ezek. xxxvii. 25.) The phrase, "All generations," must certainly include in it many generations. No man, who will be at the trouble to examine the contexts, can doubt but the above texts refer to a future age. And if there will be many generations of men in that age, each of which will live a thousand years, or nearly, then the thousand years of the apostle John cannot be interpreted literally; they must intend many thousand years; and I see no reason why we should stop short of 360,000. But what a scene here opens to our view! Consider the myriads that will be translated to heaven during this happy period, and it will not excite surprise, if the number of the lost of mankind will bear no greater proportion to the number of the saved, than the executions at Newgate do, to the inhabitants of the metropolis.

Here, then, I think, the objection is fairly met, and fully answered. Had not God created those whom he foresaw would perish, the influence of their example would have been wanting. But God urges these examples as warnings to us; such warnings, therefore, are necessary guardians of virtue; for God does nothing in vain: so that, without them, vice and misery would have reigned universally; and therefore, according to the objection, not one of the human race ought to have existed. But it is better, upon the whole, that the hu-

man race do exist, since a large majority of them will be finally happy; and thus the goodness of God, in creating those who perish, is reconciled with his foreknowledge of their perdition.

But if it were admitted, for argument's sake, that the number of the lost of mankind will exceed the number of the saved, yet the objection may be answered another way. It is highly probable, that there is a plurality of inhabited worlds; that the inhabitants of other worlds stand in a higher rank in the scale of being than the inhabitants of this world; that the number of the finally lost will bear no proportion to the number of the saved; and that the inhabitants of all the worlds in the universe stand in some relation to one another: hence the exemplary punishment of men may be useful to keep other orders of intelligent beings in a state of subjection and obedience, and thus perfectly accord with the goodness of God.

1. There is a plurality of inhabited worlds. It is certain that the other planets of this system are worlds, in many respects similar to ours. Like this, each performs its diurnal revolution round its own axis, and its annual revolution round the sun; so that they have their regular return of day and night, summer and winter. They also, in common with us, derive from the sun both light and heat, which may serve them, as well as us, for the purposes of life and vegetation. Thus we see, that in some of the most important particulars, the other planets of this system are as well provided as ours is, for the support of living creatures.* And when we consider how this world is crowded with inhabitants, we shall find it difficult to suppose that they remain a perpetual waste and desolation.†

* In Isaiah xlv. 18, we read that "God formed the earth. He created it not in vain. He formed it to be inhabited." This passage proves, that a world without inhabitants is created in vain: but God made nothing in vain: it follows, therefore, that every world is inhabited.

† "I know it is a thing uncertain and unrevealed to us, whether all these globes be inhabited or not; but he that considereth that

As the fixed stars shine with inherent light, they are suns, and, most probably, have planets rolling round them; their distances from each other being sufficiently great to admit of this. And we cannot see for what other purpose they were created. It may indeed be said, that the light of the stars is very useful to us; but it may be answered, that one more moon, at a convenient distance, would have been much more so. Neither will it explain the matter to say, that they are spread abroad through the heavens for ornament, because many of them are not visible to the naked eye; and I believe no man can think God placed them at such an amazing distance, for the entertainment of a few gazing philosophers with their glasses. But when, on the other hand, we take in the idea that the planets of this system, and of the other thousands of systems, are all inhabited by intelligent creatures, we are lost in astonishment, while contemplating the wonderful works and ways of the Creator and Preserver of the universe.*

If every world be inhabited by free agents, it has been said, that every world may, at one time or other, be in a state of apostacy; and, in that case, it would be necessary for the Son of God to be almost perpetually travelling from one world to another, and, in the several natures of the inhabitants, to make satisfaction for their

there is scarce any uninhabitable place on earth, or in the water or air, but men, or beasts, or birds, or fishes, or flies, or worms, occupy almost all parts of it, will think it a probability so near a certainty, as not to be much doubted of."—BAXTER *On the Christian Religion*, p. 389.

* "The moon, in many respects, resembles our earth. In her, as well as on our globe, we discover continents, and seas, mountains, valleys, islands, and gulfs. Such striking similitudes authorize us to admit others, and to conclude, that in the moon there are minerals and vegetables, animals, and rational creatures. The analogy between the moon and the other planets, leads us to extend the same conjectures to them; and as each fixed star has, according to all appearance, like our sun, its particular planets, so these planets undoubtedly resemble ours. Thus we see around us an innumerable multitude of worlds, each of which has its peculiar arrangement, laws, productions, and inhabitants."—STURM's *Reflections*, vol. ii., p. 185. Clarke's edit.

sins. But the probability is, as will be shown below, that there is not another world of intelligent beings, whose natures and circumstances are similar to ours; so that, supposing their apostacy, it will not be necessary to treat them exactly in the same manner. The sacred scriptures have settled this point, by assuring us that Christ died for sin once; he dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. (Rom. vi. 9, 10.) The angels, who are, probably, the next order of beings above men, did not all maintain their primitive innocence; but Jesus Christ will not redeem them; for it is written, "He taketh not hold on angels." (Heb. ii. 16.)

2. The inhabitants of other worlds stand in a higher rank in the scale of being than the inhabitants of this world. I cannot deliver my sentiments upon this subject better, than in the words of the immortal Locke, with a few notes subjoined, which I have selected from other writers for the sake of illustration. "It is not impossible to conceive, nor repugnant to reason, that there may be many species of spirits, as much separated and diversified one from another, by distinct properties, whereof we have no ideas, as the species of sensible things are distinguished one from another, by qualities which we know and observe in them. That there should be more species of intelligent creatures above us than there are of sensible and material below us, is probable to me from hence, that in all the visible corporeal world, we see no chasms or gaps. All quite down from us, the descent is by easy steps, and a continued series of things, that in each remove differ very little one from the other."*

* "There are some living creatures which are raised but just above dead matter. To mention only that species of shell fish, which are formed in the fashion of a cone, that grow to the surface of several rocks, and immediately die upon being severed from the place where they grow. There are many other creatures but one remove from these, which have no other sense besides that of feeling and taste; others have still an additional one of hearing; others of smell, and others of sight. It is wonderful to observe by what a gradual progress the world of life advances through a prodigious

“There are fishes that have wings, and are not strangers to the airy region ; and there are some birds, that are inhabitants of the water, whose blood is cold as that of fishes, and their flesh so like in taste, that the scrupulous are allowed them on fish days. There are animals so near of kin both to birds and beasts, that they are in the middle between both : amphibious animals link the terrestrial and aquatic together ; seals live at land and at sea ; and porpoises have the warm blood and entrails of a hog ; not to mention what is confidently reported of mermaids, or sea men. There are some brutes, that seem to have as much knowledge and reason as some that are called men ;* and the animal and vegetable kingdoms are so nearly joined, that if you will take the lowest of one and the highest of the other, there will scarce be perceived any great difference between them ; and so on, till we come to the lowest and the most inorganic parts of matter,† we

variety of species, before a creature is formed that is complete in all its senses ; and even among these, there is such a different degree of perfection in the sense which one animal enjoys beyond what appears in another, that though the sense in different animals be distinguished by the same common denomination, it seems almost of a different nature. If after this we look into the several inward perfections of cunning and sagacity, or what we generally call instinct, we find them rising after the same manner imperceptibly one above another, and receiving additional improvements, according to the species in which they are implanted. This progress in nature is so very gradual, that the most perfect of an inferior species come very near to the most imperfect of that which is immediately above it.”—*Spectator*, No. 519.

* “The Ourang Outang has nearly the shape and stature of a man, and appears to have some share of his intelligence. They are nimble, strong, and bold, and put themselves in a posture of defence against armed hunters. The natives take them with gins, tame them, and teach them to walk on their hind feet, employing their hands in other services, as wiping the glasses, pouring out liquor, turning the spit, and such little offices, which they perform with great dexterity.”—*Grand Magazine for May*, 1758. See also STURM’S *Reflections*, vol. iv., p. 244.

† “There are in some liquors animalcules so small, as, upon a calculation, the whole magnitude of the earth is not large enough to be a third proportional to those minute floating animals and the vast whales of the ocean. There is contained in every animalcule

shall find everywhere, that several species are linked together, and differ but in almost insensible degrees. And when we consider the infinite power and wisdom of the Maker, we have reason to think that it is suitable to the magnificent harmony of the universe, and the great design and infinite goodness of the Architect, that the species of creatures should also, by gentle degrees, ascend upward from us toward his infinite perfection, as we see they gradually descend from us downwards; which, if it be probable, we have reason then to be persuaded, that there are far more species of creatures above us, than there are beneath; we being, in degrees of perfection, much more remote from the infinite being of God, than we are from the lowest state of being, and that which approaches nearest to nothing.”*

3. The number of the finally lost will bear no proportion to the number of the saved. If the above conjecture be probable, that all the other orders of intelligent creatures gradually rise above us, we need be under no alarm respecting the fidelity of the principal part of them, since, in proportion to the excellency of their natures, they are the less likely to abuse their liberty. The whole of the human race are in a fallen state; but under circumstances which rendered it consistent with the divine perfections to provide a scheme of redemption, through which many will be finally happy. The angels are probably the next order above us. It is certain they did not all apostatise; and when we consider their favourable circumstances, and the great number of good angels spoken of in the scriptures, it will not appear likely that many of them left their first estate. The probability in favour of

the heart, that is, the fountain of its life, the muscles necessary to its motions, the glands for the secretion of its fluids, the stomach and bowels to digest its food, and other innumerable members, without which it is impossible an animal should subsist. What some philosophers have dreamed concerning angels, is true of these animalcules, namely, that many thousands of them may dance on the point of a small needle.”—KEIL's *Introduction to Natural Philosophy*, p. 56.

* Essay on Human Understanding, vol. ii., pp. 48, 49, 7th edit.

even partial apostacy will apply to only a very few orders higher; and then of the remaining thousands of orders, the presumption is, that they all persevere in a course of virtue.

4. The inhabitants of all the worlds in the universe stand related to each other; and hence the exemplary punishment of men may be useful to keep other intelligent beings in their obedience. "It is not unreasonable to suppose," says Mr. Abernethy,* "that the affairs of this lower world (principally those of its chief inhabitants) have a respect to superior natures, and are extensively useful to the whole system of intelligent creatures. That there are in the universe other species of rational agents besides mankind, and above them, cannot well be doubted. As the state and situation of distant orbs render them useful to the earth, which may be also useful to them in a different way, all conspiring to make one regular harmonious system of material nature; the like order may be, and we have reason to believe is established, among the several kinds of rational beings, which, under different particular economies, do all of them together make one beautiful and moral system."

The fallen angels did not exist in this world during their day of probation; yet we are informed of their punishment; and the apostle Paul warns us against "falling into the condemnation of the devil." (1 Tim. iii. 9.) The apostles Jude and Peter also put us in remembrance of their condition, with a view to preserve us from presumptuous sins. (Jude ver. 6; Peter ii. 4.) By parity of reason, the punishment of wicked men may be a warning to other worlds of free agents, and thus prevent their apostacy.† Hence, in creating those

* Dissertation on the Attributes of God, vol. ii., pp. 133, 140.

† "How know we, who shall survive the present world, to whom God may make man's hell a warning? Are not the devils now set out in scripture for a warning to man? And how know we what other creatures God hath, to whom these punished sinners may be a warning? or, whether the new earth wherein righteousness must dwell, according to God's promise, (2 Peter iii. 12, 13.)

who suffer forever, the goodness and foreknowledge of God perfectly harmonize. Had God foreseen that no good could be brought out of the fall, equivalent to the evil which it occasioned, no doubt but his goodness would have prevented it. But when, by the punishment of a comparative few, so many orders of creatures are kept in subjection, the evil appears so little in comparison of the good, that no objection can lie against the goodness of God in giving existence to those who he foresaw would apostatise and perish.

If it should be objected, that the punishment of the wicked can be of no service to others any longer than during their day of probation, and therefore, when that is ended, punishment should cease; it is sufficient to reply, that if examples of suffering under the sentence of everlasting misery be necessary to preserve order in the universe, the God of truth must execute the sentence; for it cannot be supposed that the foundation of the divine government is laid in a lie. But it may be remarked further, that no man can say the Almighty will not be creating new worlds through all endless duration. To these worlds, as they successively spring into existence, the condition of the finally impenitent of our earth may be a warning.*

On the whole, it is not pretended that the above is as clear as a mathematical demonstration; but neither is it necessary. I have shown how it is possible to reconcile the creation of those who perish forever with the perfections of God; and, since revelation has not explained the matter, that is sufficient. In some cases, God has not given us the reasons of his conduct; and

shall not have use of this warning to keep them in their righteousness? As long as all these things are probable, and the contrary utterly uncertain, how foolish a thing is it, to go from the light of a plain revelation and scripture, and argue from our dark uncertainties against the light!—BAXTER *On the Christian Religion*, p. 394.

* “The eternal punishment of wicked men and angels may continue an eternal monument of disobedience and divine displeasure, perhaps to many other systems of intelligent agents created to probation.”—*Cure of Deism*, vol. i., p. 325.

then, if we inquire into it, we are necessarily involved in difficulties. (Job xxxiii. 13; Rom. xi. 33.) We may conjecture, and our conjectures may in some instances appear probable; but it is not in our power to arrive at certainty. God did not acquaint Abraham how the command to sacrifice his son could be reconciled with the promise, that through his son he should be the father of many nations; (Genesis xvii. 4;) nor could Abraham see how the promise would be made good; but he did not suppose the Almighty would be at any loss upon that head, and therefore he staggered not at the promise through unbelief. He knew, if there were no other way, God could raise him from the dead. Here we see that Abraham was so far from discerning with certainty how this difficulty would be cleared up, that he saw only one way in which it was possible, and that did not turn out to be the method which the Almighty adopted. God may have a thousand reasons for what he does, and a thousand different ways of bringing about his purposes, which may not be within the ken of mortals. There is nothing wrong, however, in trying to find out his reasons and ways of action, provided it be done with humility; but if we pertinaciously arraign the wisdom and power of God, when we can proceed no farther, we only display our pride and ignorance. Are we acquainted with all his works and ways? Can he do nothing which short sighted mortals cannot explain?

If it should be said, that what is advanced respecting all the planets being inhabited, and all the other species of intelligent creatures rising gradually above us by almost imperceptible degrees, is supported by very slender evidence; or should it even be proved to be impossible, (though I am quite confident it cannot,) yet it must not be forgotten, that these things are not immediately connected with the main argument. The scriptures inform us, that, besides men, there are other intelligent beings; that some of them sinned and are suffering; that their sufferings are recorded as a warning to us; that others maintain their integrity; and

that we ought to strive to do the will of God on earth, as they do in heaven. Thus the most material points are proved from the sacred scripture: and but few will deny the following inference to be very probable,—that God will make the punishment of wicked men a warning to others, and thereby prevent a greater evil, which is a sufficient reason for their existence.*

When a doctrine is clearly proved from scripture, all difficulties should give way to, “Thus saith the Lord;” for it is easy to ask questions upon a known truth which no man can fully answer. But such a mode of disputing is like casting dust into a person’s eyes; it is to perplex rather than to elucidate a subject; it is inconsistent with that reverence which is due to the divine authority, and can only serve a bad cause.

SECTION VI.

ON THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD’S COUNSELS.

MR. Winchester, after citing Ephesians i. 8—11; 1 Timothy ii. 3, 4, remarks: “If God will have all men to be saved or restored, and to come to the knowledge of the truth; if it is his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to re-head all things in Christ, both in heaven and on earth; and if he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; then is not the doctrine of the restoration true?”†

* “Why may not all the misery in this system of ours promote and increase the happiness of some others? We have good reason to believe that there is some connexion between the different systems of the universe, but have small ground to imagine ours the best. Why then may it not be subservient to a better? This indeed is only conjecture: however, I think it would be no easy matter to confute it; till which be done, we may very safely conclude, that the fall itself, as well as all the sin and misery consequent upon it, could not have been prevented without greater detriment to the whole.”—KING’S *Origin of Evil*, p. 471. Law’s Note.

† Dialogues, p. 101.

It is allowed that the good pleasure of God, to gather together, or re-head all things in Christ, was not defeated : for we read in verse 22, that God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." The gathering together, or re-heading all things in Christ, therefore, cannot mean the restoring all things in Christ, because that hath taken place, but this hath not. The apostle was writing "to the saints at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus," and he informs them of a mystery of the divine will which was, "in the dispensation of thefulness of times," or under the gospel dispensation, (see Gal. iv. 4,) to raise Jesus Christ to the head of his moral government, and to invest him with full authority over "all things in heaven and on earth." In verse 22, the apostle informs them that that happy event had then taken place, and that the Redeemer's authority was exercised for the good of the church. This would be full of consolation to the faithful saints ; but what has it to do with the restoration of wicked men and devils ? Suppose his majesty were to resign the government of these kingdoms into the hands of his son, with a charge to exercise his authority for the benefit of his faithful subjects ; should we not think the man deranged in his intellects who should conclude from it, that every prisoner would be set at liberty, and that there would be no more disorder in society ?

The will of God, as expressed in 1 Timothy, ii. 3, 4, may be frustrated. The Universalists believe that repentance, faith, and obedience, are necessary in order to salvation ; and they know very well that the will of God respecting our repentance, faith, and obedience, is daily frustrated in innumerable instances. The apostle wrote under the influence of the Holy Ghost, and therefore expressed the will of God, when he said, "I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." But do men pray everywhere ? Do they everywhere lift up holy hands ? Must we search everywhere in vain for a wrathful person or a sceptic ? Now what an absurdity

is it to pretend that the end is certain and necessary, when experience proves that the means in order to it are contingent? The predestinarians are consistent upon this subject: they hold that those who are predestinated to eternal life, are necessitated to perform the conditions upon which it is suspended. And indeed the connexion between the end and the means is so close, that even a child must perceive the one cannot be absolutely determined while the other is involved in uncertainty.

A great deal of confusion has arisen upon this subject, from not considering in what cases the will of God may be opposed with success, and in what cases it cannot. The will of God, so far as it is made known to us, is irresistible in everything, except where the co-operation of the human will is necessary to bring about his purposes. God cannot make man virtuous and happy without the concurrence of his will; and no violence must be done to it, for there can be no moral virtue without moral liberty. Man may therefore, by continued resistance, defeat the will of God concerning his salvation. The word of God is very express upon this subject: "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." (Matt. xxiii. 37.) Here the will of man and the will of God are represented as opposed to each other, and the will of man as prevailing.

Mr. Vidler on 1 Timothy ii. 3, 4, says, "It would be, perhaps, a sufficient answer, in the opinion of most persons, only to ask, is the apostle speaking here of a command, or of a purpose of the divine mind?"* I beg leave to ask, whether it be not the purpose of the divine mind, that the commandments should be kept? if it be, is not the divine purpose frustrated when they are broken? I wish to inquire farther, whether it be

* God's Love to his Creatures, p. 24.

the purpose of God to save any who do not obey his commands? if not, since Mr. V. grants that his will respecting our obedience may be resisted, I shall be glad to know how it can be proved that his will respecting our salvation is irresistible?

To show that the divine purpose cannot be frustrated, Mr. V. refers to Isaiah xliii. 13; xli. 11; Daniel iv. 35; Ephesians i. 11. I have granted that the will of God is irresistible in everything except in the virtue and happiness of his creatures. The above texts do not militate against this exception, and therefore do not require any further notice.

SECTION VII.

ON THE EXTENT AND EFFICACY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

CHRIST died for all men. I infer from this proposition that the salvation of all men is possible: my opponents infer from it that the salvation of all men is certain. My inference supposes salvation to be conditional; theirs supposes it to be unconditional. Does it require a scribe well instructed in the law to determine this matter? And yet it has been confidently asserted, that a consistent Arminian must be a Universalist.

Mr. Weaver writes in the following curious manner on 1 Timothy iv. 10: "By saying, the saviour of all men, he includes the whole, both saints and sinners; and then adding, especially of them that believe, he distinguishes the righteous from the wicked, by which distinction it is plain he meant to include both. But if Jesus Christ be the saviour of all men, and yet is not the saviour of all men, nor ever will be, is not this a contradiction in terms?"* I believe with Mr. W. that Jesus Christ "is the saviour of all men." But

* Free Thoughts on the Universal Restoration, p. 89.

the question is, in what sense must we understand this phrase? The additional words, "Especially of them that believe," show that he is the saviour of believers and of unbelievers in two very different senses, which would not be true on the supposition that all are finally to be made holy and happy. The obvious meaning of the passage is, he is the saviour of all men conditionally, and of believers fully and eternally. But what has this to do with their doctrine, of the final restoration of all; especially considering the distinction which they have lately made between restoration and salvation.

"It appears from 1 John iii. 8," says Mr. Weaver, "that if the works of the devil are not destroyed, the purpose of God's Son is not accomplished. And how the works of the devil can be destroyed, if nine-tenths of mankind be left to blaspheme forever, I know not."* Guy Fawkes had prepared works for the ruin of the nation: were not his works destroyed without his being made prime minister? Before it can be concluded from this text, that punishment must come to an end, it must be shown that it is the work of the devil, rather than of Jesus Christ, to punish sinners for their sins.

Mr. Weaver tacks together John i. 29, xii. 47, and informs us, that the world, whose sins the Lamb of God taketh away, is "that world who hear his words and believe not. But how this world is to be saved," says he, "if their punishment is to be without end, I must confess I know not."† Nor I neither. Nor yet do I know of any text of scripture which says that the infidel world is to be saved. I am sure neither of the passages to which Mr. W. refers, says any such thing; and I know who hath said, "He that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life."

Mark ii. 10, is next brought forward by this gentleman. "If the birth of Christ," he observes, "was to be in fact good tidings of great joy, and that to all people, then all people must be benefited by it; but,

* Free Thoughts, p. 91.

† Ibid., p. 91.

if endless misery be true," etc.* The quality of tidings, then, it seems, depends upon the treatment which they meet with; wicked people may, therefore, tell God at the day of judgment, that they never received one gracious message from him; for if they had, they must have been benefited by it; and they may very truly say that they never derived any advantage from the tidings which they received from heaven. I have been in the habit of thinking that those tidings deserve the denomination of good, which propose any advantages to me, whether I avail myself of them, or not.

Mr. Weaver assumes much importance on Romans xi. 11, 12, 25, 26, 32, 33. "I would be glad to know," says he, "what riches there can be in that system which shuts up a whole nation in unbelief for many ages together, that he," God, "might at last have mercy on their offspring. Every good man would desire to be excused from such a happiness as he can receive only at the expense of his ancestors' infinite misery."† A man of Mr. W.'s pretensions to Greek and Hebrew criticism, ought to have known that the word "them," is not in the original. The "all," concluded or locked up in unbelief, includes both Jews and Gentiles.‡ The Gentiles in times past had not believed God; (ver. 30;) that is, were not his people by profession, this privilege being restricted to the Jews. "Yet ye," the Gentiles, "have now obtained mercy through their," the Jews', "unbelief;" that is, are called to a profession of the gospel, and to the enjoyment of its privileges. (See Acts xviii. 6; xxviii. 28, 29.) The apostle goes on: "Even so have these," the Jews, "also now not believed, that through your," the Gentiles, "mercy they also may obtain mercy," by being provoked to jealousy. (See verse 11.) He then observes, "God hath concluded," or shut up, "all," both Jews and Gentiles by turns, "in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."

From this review of divine providence, in calling

* Free Thoughts, p. 91. † Ibid., p. 59.

‡ See Coke's comment on this text.

the Gentiles to be, by profession, the people of God under the gospel, after the Jews had rejected it; in his provoking the Jews to jealousy by their observing his mercy to the Gentiles; and in his bringing the nation of the Jews, by this method, to a profession of the gospel; the apostle might well exclaim, "O the depth!" etc. But what is there in this like bringing about the conversion of the Jews, in the latter days, at the expense of their ancestors' infinite misery? If many of the Jews perish, it is not to purchase the salvation of their posterity, but as a punishment for their own unbelief, of which unbelief, they themselves are the authors, and not God.

If the Universalists will have it that this chapter has anything to do with their doctrine of a restoration from hell, they should inform us how the believing Gentiles can be said to provoke the Jews in hell to jealousy, and thereby induce them to seek salvation; for the apostle says, "Salvation is come unto the Gentiles for to provoke them," the Jews, "to jealousy." He also observes of himself, "I am the apostle of the Gentiles; I magnify mine office; if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them." But I have not yet read of the apostle magnifying his office so far as to try to provoke the inhabitants of hell to emulation, that he might save them. If the Universalists have found out a method of doing this, it is a pity they have not published their discovery to the world, that others might assist them in this salutary undertaking.

We read of the restoration of all Israel, in Ezekiel xxxvii. 21, 24: "I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation, and one king shall be king to them all, and they all shall have one shepherd," etc. The dead cannot be included in this account, because these Israelites are not represented as being taken out of hell, but from among the heathen nations. The political distinctions here spoken

of, will not exist after the day of judgment. The increase of population mentioned in verse 26, cannot take place, according to our Lord, after the resurrection. Now can any man make it appear that the "all" of the apostle is to be understood in a more comprehensive sense than that of the prophet; and that they do not both refer to the same period?

Mr. Wright remarks on Romans v. 20, 21: "To suppose that sin will abound, and death reign to all eternity, over millions of creatures, is to suppose that grace never will abound equally with sin; but the apostle saith much more; and if grace do not ultimately reign over all mankind, it cannot be said that grace ever will reign as sin hath reigned, for sin hath reigned over all."* Mr. Wright is mistaken as to the meaning of the word "sin," in this passage. He supposes it means all the sins, of all men, in all ages. But if this were its meaning, the apostle's assertion in the next verses (chap. vi. 1, 2) would not be true; for if we continued in sin, grace would abound; and the more sin we committed, there would be the more grace; but the apostle enters a caveat against putting any such sense on his words, and says, "God forbid." If sin in this place is to be understood in Mr. W.'s comprehensive sense, even then, grace could only abound as much as sin; for how it could abound over more than all sin, I confess I have not penetration enough to discern; but the apostle says "much more." By sin, in this text, I understand the sin of Adam, which hath reigned unto death. (Verse 12.) Grace abounds as much as this sin, by justifying us from it as soon as we are brought into existence. (Verse 18.) And it abounds much more, by taking away all the personal sins of believers, making them righteous, and conducting them to a glorious immortality. This interpretation is confirmed by verses 15, 16. Here the sin is called the offence of one, and the abounding of grace consists not only in the justification of many (all) per-

* Hints on the Restoration, pp. 9, 10.

sons from the one sin of Adam, but also in the justification of all believers from their many personal offences. In this view, the words "much more" may be understood with strict propriety, if the pardon of all the offences committed by millions of believers may be considered as a matter of great importance.

Mr. Winchester contends that Hebrews ii. 9, should be rendered, according to some manuscripts, "For all except God."* I cannot see what would be gained, if this were admitted. The Universalists will restrict the word "all" to intelligent beings; and of these they will except the good angels, as they stood in no need of a saviour. And I shall take the liberty to leave out the fallen angels, because we are told (verse 16) that he taketh not hold of them. And though he died for all men, yet he bringeth only the many sons to glory. (Verse 10.) We become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and he will profit those nothing, who do not believe. (Gal. iii. 26; v. 2—4.) This text, therefore, affords no support to the doctrine of restoration.

"I ground the restoration of all things," says Mr. Winchester, "upon these two premises, which I call the major and the minor: 1. That all things are given to the Son, without exception. 2. That all that are given him, shall come to him, in such a manner as not to be cast out; and that none shall be missing, lost, or wholly destroyed."† I have no controversy with any man about the major. Mr. W. refers to John vi. 37, 39, in proof of the minor. But these verses relate only to the salvation of believers, who hear and learn of the Father, not in hell, but on earth, (verses 44, 45,) and therefore come to Christ, and are said to be given to him in a peculiar sense. This must be evident to every one who attentively, and without prejudice, reads the whole paragraph. I shall only quote from verse 35: "Jesus said, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said that ye also have

* Dialogues, p. 40.

† Ibid., p. 140.

seen me and believe not. All that the Father giveth me," in a peculiar sense, namely, all that hear and learn of him, (verse 45,) "will come to me," *pros eme exeî*: that is, will believe in me; "and him that" thus "cometh," by faith, "to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will who sent me, that of all which he hath given me," namely, all that hear and learn of him, and therefore believe in Christ, "I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

In short, although the Father hath given all things into the hands of Christ as a proprietor, and Christ will raise all men again at the last day, and, as a sovereign, will reward his faithful, and punish his rebellious subjects; yet the Father only giveth believers into his hands, as a saviour, that they may obtain everlasting life. Accordingly, in the verse last quoted, the very verse following that which Mr. W. refers to in proof of the restoration, everlasting life is restricted, by the will of God, to believers.

It is impossible to make common sense of chapter xvii. 2, 6, without admitting this distinction. "Thou hast given him power over all flesh. I have manifested thy name to the men which thou gavest me out of the world." Here we see that all are given into the hands of Christ, and that some are given him out of these, that is, out of the world. Of the former it is said, he hath power over them; that is, to govern them. But of the latter it is said, he hath manifested the name of God to them; that is, to save them. We see also, that the gift in this latter sense is not so extensive as in the former; and if it were, the restoration intended could not be inferred from it; for Judas was one of those given to Christ out of the world, and yet Judas became a son of perdition, and was lost. (Verse 12.)

On John xii. 32, Mr. Winchester remarks: "He was

lifted up from the earth, and therefore the if, is now no more; he will certainly draw all unto himself, and give eternal life, or the knowledge of God, to all."* But where is the proof that, to draw all unto himself, signifies to give eternal life to all? In the preceding verse, with which this is immediately connected, our Lord is speaking about judgment, not salvation. "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." He then adds: "And I, if I be lifted up," etc. The passage may be thus paraphrased: "Now is the judgment given concerning satan's usurped authority over this world. As its prince, he is judged, (chap. xvi. 11,) and shall be cast out. And when I have suffered upon the cross, my Father will exalt me to the head of his moral government; I will then act in a judicial capacity in relation to men; I will draw all men unto my tribunal."

The promise made to Abraham has often been urged in favour of the doctrine of restoration. "This," as Mr. Fisher observed, "as it is explained by the apostle, (Gal. iii. 8—26,) is referred to Christ, and supposed to receive its accomplishment in all those who believe the gospel; and that the rest of mankind are not interested in that promise, but remain under the curse." This is very clear: "And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, 'In thee shall all nations be blessed.' So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." If the blessing be not here restricted to believers, and the rest left under the curse, I will give up all pretensions to common sense. Mr. Vidler, however, contends that this is not the "full import of the promise." This is only saying, in other words, that unbelievers are not under the curse. Poor Paul! what a short sighted creature thou art, not to understand the

* Dialogues, p. 143.

full import of the promises ! “ We distinguish,” says Mr. V., “ betwixt the commencement, progress, and consummation of the prophetic promises of God.” Distinguish as you will, you cannot extend the blessing to unbelievers, without giving the lie to the apostle. Mr. V., however, makes the attempt, and we shall see presently with what success. “ The promise made to Abraham, that he should be the heir of the world, (Romans iv. 13,) ultimately referred to Christ, whom the Father hath appointed heir of all things. (Heb. i. 2.) The apostle explains the phrases ‘ all nations,’ ‘ all the earth,’ ‘ all the families of the earth,’ ‘ by the world,’ and ‘ all things.’ In Peter’s address to the Jews, in Acts iii. 19—26, he connects the restitution of all things (verse 21) with the covenant which God made with their fathers. Surely, to be ‘ heir of all things,’ must signify something more than to be heir of the church, and ‘ the restitution of all things,’ must mean something more than the salvation of the church.”*

Let the promise made to Abraham, that he should be heir of the world, refer ultimately to whom it may, it is expressly limited to believers. “ For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh wrath.” (Rom. iv. 13—15.)

“ The apostle Peter connects the restitution of all things with the covenant which God made with the fathers. Surely the restitution of all things must mean something more, than the salvation of the church.” And who ever denied it ? But must it “ surely mean” the restoration of wicked men and devils out of hell ? This is the task which Mr. V. undertook ; but he has failed in the performance of it. Of these “ times of restitution of all things,” the apostle informs us, “ God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since

* God’s Love to his Creatures, p. 17.

the world began." Now can Mr. V. produce any thing out of the writings of all the prophets since the world began, in support of his doctrine of restoration? But I will spare him the trouble. Peter immediately mentions one of the prophets, who spake to the fathers upon the subject. "Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." (Ver. 22, 23.) In these times of restitution, then, according to Moses, it shall come to pass that every unbeliever shall be destroyed. Mr. V. therefore spoke very wisely when he observed that the restitution of all things must mean something more than the salvation of the church, for we see that it includes in it the destruction, not the salvation, of her enemies.

SECTION VIII.

ON RECONCILIATION BY CHRIST, AND HIS INTERCESSION.

Mr. Winchester makes the following remark upon Colossians i. 15—20: "As the word *all*, is generally acknowledged to be used in its most extensive sense in every place of this paragraph except the last, there is no reason to be given why the apostle should change the sense of the word without giving us the least notice of it."*

Mr. Vidler also is of opinion, that the reconciliation spoken of in this paragraph includes devils as well as men. "Let it be observed," says he, "that all rational creatures are either things in earth, or things in heaven; that is, things of earthly original, or things of heavenly original: nothing was made in hell, even hell

* Dialogues, p. 43.

itself is only the consequence of the creature's transgression. All the things therefore which are in heaven, or which are in earth, must mean every rational creature that needed reconciliation. That this is the sense of the apostle may be justly urged from verse 15. It will not be denied that every man and every angel are here included, as being created by Christ, and for Christ, and having their existence in Christ. Paul then goes on to say that Christ is the head of the body, the church, etc. Let any man ask,—

“1. Whether it be not here included that Jesus Christ made the devils; not indeed as devils, but as pure and holy angels.

“2. Whether Jesus Christ did not make them for himself.

“3. Whether Jesus Christ did not now uphold them in being. For, ‘By him all things consist.’

“4. Let him ask whether the all things, in heaven and in earth, in verse 20, which are to be reconciled by the blood of his cross, are not the same all things, said to be created by Jesus Christ in verse 16. And if so,—

“5. Whether devils are not to be reconciled as well as men.”*

I have given their arguments at length on this celebrated passage, and shall now proceed to answer them.

Mr. V. supposes that by “all things that are in heaven, and that are in earth,” the apostle means all things of earthly, and of heavenly original. This curious interpretation of his words is the foundation on which Mr. V.’s fabric for the accommodation of devils is built. I will take away the foundation, and then the Babel will fall of itself. The apostle does not say where they were created, but where they existed at the time he was writing; for he writes in the present tense,—“That are in heaven, and that are in earth;” if therefore he meant to include the fallen angels, and the lost of mankind, he ought to have added, “And that are in

* God’s Love to his Creatures, pp. 21, 22.

hell." It is evident that he did not substitute the present tense for the past, because, when speaking of the time of creation, in the former part of the verse, he uses the past tense,—“By him were all things created;” and if he meant to speak of the place of their existence at that time, he ought to have proceeded, as he begun, in the past tense, and to have said, “that were in heaven and that were in earth.” This remark serves to overturn all that Mr. V. has said; for if things in hell are not included in this account of creation, I believe no one will suppose that they are included in the reconciliation.

If it be inquired, “What things in heaven stood in need of reconciliation?” I answer, that all the saints who were in heaven at the time the apostle wrote, once needed reconciliation: and it was through Jesus Christ, that God reconciled them unto himself; for they were saved through faith in Christ as a lamb slain (intentionally) from the foundation of the world.

In Hebrews, chap. ii., the exclusion of devils from the benefits arising from the death of Christ is expressed in very strong terms. “For verily he taketh not hold of angels.” (Verse 16. See the marginal reading.) The reason why he assumed human nature, is stated in verses 14, 15, 17: “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Wherefore, in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” There are three things remarkable in this passage. (1.) The fallen angels will not be saved through the death of Christ, but destroyed. (2.) The children for whom Christ died, to make reconciliation for their sins, are said to be partakers of flesh and blood: but the devils are not partakers of flesh and blood; therefore, they are not his children, nor has he

made reconciliation for their sins. (3.) Atonement can only be made in the same nature which offended. It behoved Christ to be made like unto his brethren in all things, that he might be qualified as their high priest, to make reconciliation for their sins. This is the reason why he took flesh and blood in order to redeem mankind. The devils, therefore, cannot be benefited by what Christ did in the human nature, seeing they do not partake of flesh and blood. If they are his brethren, and he intends to make reconciliation for their sins, it behoves him to be made like unto them in all things; that is, it is necessary he should assume their nature. But the Universalists do not contend for their salvation in any other way than by the blood of the cross; we may, therefore, very safely conclude, that they have neither part nor lot in this matter.

Messrs. Weaver and Vidler both allow that the seed of Abraham, on whom Christ taketh hold, means all believers under the present dispensation; but these they call, the first fruits; and Mr. V. wishes to know, "whether the harvest will not follow;" that is, whether unbelievers and devils will not reap everlasting life. The apostle James calls the believers of his day, with propriety, the first fruits, because they were the first converts under the gospel dispensation; but whether believers, eighteen hundred years afterwards, ought to be viewed in the same light, may be disputed. However, as these gentlemen expect such a wonderful crop in the time of harvest, it may be necessary to inform them, that our Lord has given a pretty full account of it in Matthew xiii. When that season arrives, the angels, who are the reapers, will "gather the tares," that is, "the children of the wicked one, and cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." So that after the harvest is got in, many will have to say, "The first fruits are gathered, the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

The word "all," in Colossians i. 15—20, cannot be understood in so comprehensive a sense, when applied

to reconciliation, as when applied to creation ; because, though Jesus Christ created, he did not die to reconcile the holy angels. Mr. Vidler says : " There must be a reconciliation betwixt them, and such as are reconciled to God by Jesus Christ."* But it must be observed, that God did not give Jesus Christ to die, that saints and angels might be reconciled to each other ; but " that he might reconcile all things unto himself." And in this sense, the holy angels could not require reconciliation.

The design of God respecting the reconciliation of men is, in many instances, frustrated. He hath committed to his ministers the word of reconciliation, and they beseech and pray sinners to be reconciled to God. (2 Cor. v. 19, 20.) Yet numbers do not receive their testimony. They may still justly complain with the prophet : " Who hath believed our report ?" And even after the reconciliation hath taken place, final salvation is suspended upon the condition of perseverance ; for immediately after the apostle had expressed the pleasure of God about the reconciliation of all things, he adds, " And you hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable in his sight ; if ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." Now, if devils are not included in this account of reconciliation, and if the reconciliation and final salvation of men be conditional, then this passage affords no support to the universal restoration.

On John xvii. 20, 23, Mr. Winchester observes, that " when the church shall be one in spirit, love, design, judgment, etc., as the Father and Son are, then shall the world believe, and, believing, have life ; then shall the world know him, whom to know is life eternal. But, as this great cause has never yet existed, the effect has not yet followed ; but when the first shall be, the last shall take place in consequence." Mr. W. has not left us in the dark about the time when these events will

* God's Love, p. 22.

happen. His friend asks, "When shall the world believe and know that Christ is the sent of God?" Mr. W. answers, "When the great marriage of the Lamb shall be celebrated, and his Bride shall be one in universal love and fellowship, as the Father and the Son now are."* When I had read this, I turned over to Revelation xix., which gives an account of the marriage, to see whether the whore of Babylon was invited to the feast, and made one of the bridemaids; but I found all heaven rejoicing that he had judged the great whore, and singing Alleluia, because her smoke rose up forever and ever!

SECTION IX.

ON JUDGMENT BY JESUS CHRIST.

"ALL punishments inflicted by God," says Mr. Wright, "are connected with mercy; to him belongeth mercy, even when he rendereth to every man according to his work."† (Psalm lxii. 12.) If Mr. W. means, that it is an act of mercy to render to every wicked man according to his work; how will he reconcile it with what he hath said about "justice not requiring that sinners should receive according to their demerits?"‡ Wherein lies the difference between rendering to every wicked man according to his work, and every sinner receiving according to his demerits? And yet, it seems, one would be an act of mercy, the other would exceed the demands of justice!

It is granted, that punishments are connected with mercy, but not that the mercy always extends to the individual sufferers. God "divided the Red Sea into parts, and made Israel to pass through the midst of it, but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea; for his mercy endureth forever." (Psalm cxxxvi. 13—15.) Mercy is here connected with the overthrow

* Dialogues, pp. 96, 97.

† Hints, p. 6.

‡ Examination, pp. 36, 37.

of Pharaoh and his host ; but no man, in his senses, supposes the mercy extended to the Egyptians. It was a mercy to the Israelites to be delivered in this way out of the hands of their enemies. In Psalm lxii., we find that David, like the Israelites above, was surrounded with enemies. They imagined mischief against him. (Verse 3.) They consulted to cast him down from his excellency. (Verse 4.) He had recourse to God for defence, and exhorts the saints to a similar conduct, under similar circumstances. (Verses 5, 8.) He then warns the wicked of the sinfulness and vanity of their attempts against God's people. (Verses 9, 10.) And his own confidence, his exhortation to the saints, and his warning to the wicked, are all founded upon the next words : "God hath spoken once ; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy ; for thou renderest to every man according to his work." (Verses 11, 12.) Upon the whole, then, we learn, that God has power to protect his saints, and to punish their enemies ; and that the mercy which he keeps for his saints, will induce him to exercise his power in the way of judgment upon the wicked : he will render to them according to their works, as, in the case of Pharaoh and his host, and thus deliver his people.

Mr. Wright proceeds : "The future existence of mankind is the consequence of the death and resurrection of Christ ; (John xi. 25 ; 1 Cor. xv., 22 ; 2 Tim. i. 10 ;) but it is acknowledged that the death and resurrection of Christ are effects of divine love ; consequently, everything arising from his death and resurrection must be an effect of love. The Son of God will judge and punish the wicked ; consequently, his judging and punishing them will be mediatorial acts, intended to bring them into subjection, and reconcile them to God."*

If all the effects of a cause are effects of divine love, because that cause is an effect of that love, it will fol-

* Hints, pp. 6, 7.

low, that, since the existence of man, as a free agent, is an effect of the love of God, everything produced by man as a free agent, is an effect of it also ; that is, the sins of men are effects of the love of God !

Although the death and resurrection of Christ are effects of divine love, this does not hinder but that the benefits, flowing from these gracious acts, may be proposed to mankind upon certain conditions, and that those who do not comply with the terms of the new covenant may be deprived of its blessings. His majesty, instead of executing the laws against an army of rebels, makes proclamation, that all who will lay down their arms and return to their duty within a limited period, shall be restored to the same privileges with his other subjects ; but that if they do not cease from their unnatural rebellion within the term specified, they shall be proceeded against as rebels and traitors. Does this gracious proclamation prevent his majesty from punishing with death those who despise it ? Yet, in Mr. W.'s way of drawing consequences, it is easy to prove, that those who continue in rebellion will be dealt with in mercy. Thus : " The prolonged existence of these rebels is the effect of his majesty's gracious proclamation. It is acknowledged that his majesty's proclamation is the effect of his love ; consequently, everything arising from this proclamation is an effect of love. His majesty will judge and hang those who obstinately persevere in rebellion ; consequently, his judging and hanging them will be gracious acts, intended to make them good members of civil society !" In fact, if we allow Mr. W.'s consequences to be just, it may be shown very readily, that when one act of mercy has passed, nothing but mercy can follow.

It is surely most curious language to tell sinners that it is an act of love and mercy in God to send them to hell. Why should they be afraid of going to hell, if there be nothing but the love and mercy of God displayed there ? Is the contemplation of these divine perfections calculated to inspire them with fear ?

To show the tendency of Mr. W.'s doctrine, I will suppose the following conversation to take place between him and a person who is in the habit of attending his ministry, and of reading his productions from the press :—

Mr. W. You are far advanced in years, Mr. F., what do you think about another world ?

Mr. F. I cannot say, sir, that I am prepared for heaven ; but it is some consolation to me, that the horrible doctrine of everlasting damnation is not true.

W. Poor consolation, indeed ! You cannot tell how severe future punishment may be, nor how long it may continue. Is it not the height of folly to run the hazard of enduring the most extreme tortures for ages, merely to gratify your sinful inclinations for a few days ?

F. If I were conscious of any such hazard, I would immediately subscribe to the folly of my conduct. But have you not informed the world that “all punishments are connected with mercy ?” and also, that “God cannot act toward any creature, at any time, but from a principle of love ?”^{*} Now, will a God of love and mercy inflict punishment greater in degree, or of longer duration, than is necessary to bring his creatures to virtue and happiness ?

W. But, for ought we know, extreme punishment, for a long time, may be necessary to bring about those ends.

F. The direct contrary, is clearly deducible from your writings. You know that the above description is calculated to beget fear ; whereas you have observed, in reply to Dr. Ryland, (p. 18,) that “the government of God is not the reign of terror ; that men are not to be frightened into his love ; that if they saw his loveliness, and perceived his love to them, they certainly would love and obey him.” I cannot possibly see how this representation can accord with any punishment ; much less with punishment that will be very severe, and of long duration.

^{*} Hints, p. 4.

W. "It is not supposed by us, that the wicked will be conquered and made virtuous by mere torment, only that their sufferings may conduce to their conviction of the evil and bitter nature of sin, in order to their being fitted to become recipients of divine mercy, by which they will be healed and restored."*

F. If a conviction of the evil and bitter nature of sin be all that is necessary, in order to become a recipient of divine mercy; then I may hope to escape all future punishment, since, if I die in my present state, I shall go into the other world with this conviction.

W. "As God doth not afflict willingly, all the sufferings of the present state have a tendency to bring men to reflection, that they may be humbled before the Lord; and how will it be proved that the sufferings of the wicked hereafter will not have the same tendency?"†

F. An advocate for the tremendous doctrine of endless torments would object, that you apply that text in too great a latitude, and ask you how the destruction of the Sodomites had so happy a tendency, with many other puzzling questions; but I entirely coincide with your views of the passage. You have, however, furnished me with arguments, in the very next page, to remove all apprehensions of anything very dreadful; for you observe, "That sufferings in the present life have not always a good effect, may be accounted for by considering that sinners do not, generally, view them as coming from the hand of God, nor consider sin as the cause of them: no wonder, then, that they are not humbled under the divine hand; but they must have very different ideas when under future punishment." You go on to say, "that men in this life, however great their sufferings, find many alleviations, many things to divert their attention and dissipate their thoughts; but none of these circumstances can exist in the future state of punishment." Now,

* Examination, p. 46.

† Ibid., p. 48.

sir, if the peculiarity of men's circumstances here be the reason why the sufferings of this life do not always terminate in conversion, if those hindrances will not exist in another world, and if God do not afflict willingly,—then it must follow, that greater sufferings than those of the present life will not be necessary to bring men to virtue in the life to come, and of course will not be inflicted. It would, therefore, be as absurd to live in the fear of hell, as to torment myself with the thought,—I am subject to bodily affliction and disease. In short, sir, should I find my situation in the other world unpleasant, I have only to pray for qualifications for a better, and, in answer to prayer, I shall obtain both. You will, therefore, excuse me, if I say, that there is nothing in the decision of a future judgment of an alarming nature.

Who does not see that the jargon of this carnal professor is consistent with the doctrine of universal restitution? The scriptures uniformly represent the day of judgment as a most dreadful season to the wicked, from the consideration that the divine vengeance will be then displayed in its most terrific forms; (2 Thess. i. 8—10;) whereas, the Universalists' account of it is only calculated to harden the lukewarm and careless, and to bolster up the presumptuous hypocrite. What a dreadful account will such ministers have to give, when they undergo the strict scrutiny of their Judge! A doctrine which is unfavourable to the interests of morality, by destroying a sanction of the divine law, has its origin inscribed upon its forehead, in very legible characters.

Mr. Vidler affirms, “ that judgment is a mediatorial work, and founded upon the mercy of God in Christ.”* Let judgment be founded upon what it may, it cannot be a mediatorial work, for that is a contradiction in terms. To judge, is to determine a case according to law. To mediate, is to endeavour to reconcile contending parties. It is, therefore, impossible for a person

* Dialogues, Note, p. 77.

to act in both these capacities, toward the same individual, at the same time; while he is mediating, he cannot be judging; and while he is judging, he cannot be mediating.

The proof that judgment is founded upon mercy is given in these words: "However judgment may be shown without mercy during the proper age thereof, yet mercy shall finally rejoice against judgment." I suppose Mr. V. wishes to be understood, that the same persons may have judgment without mercy, and afterwards find mercy. It is really astonishing that a writer, in the same paragraph, should venture on so palpable an absurdity: judgment is founded on mercy, and yet, judgment may be shown without mercy! If Mr. V. can reconcile such contradictions, he is qualified to prove, that darkness is light, and light darkness. I suppose he had an eye to James ii. 13. A little attention to the context will convince any unbiassed mind that the apostle alludes to two sorts of persons. There is a "royal law," which the saints are under. It is defined in these terms: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Verse 8.) By this law they will be judged: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." (Verse 12.) Hence we gather, that those who obey this law, by their acts of mercy, will find mercy in judgment, according to Matthew v. 7: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." But the wicked, who have "showed no mercy," shall have "judgment without mercy." This is clear and consistent; but I have yet to learn, how those who have no judgment but what is in mercy, can, notwithstanding, have judgment without mercy.

SECTION X.

ON SUBJECTION TO CHRIST.

ON Isaiah xlv. 23, Mr. Winchester remarks : " Mind well, every tongue shall swear. Swearing allegiance, as every civilian will tell you, implies pardon, reception, and protection, on the part of the king, and a hearty renouncing of rebellion, true subjection, and willing obedience, on the part of the rebels."* Mr. W. has here taken for granted, what ought to have been proved, namely, that to swear to Christ, intends swearing allegiance. The following verse is inconsistent with such an interpretation : " Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength : even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." If to swear, in this passage, denotes swearing allegiance ; and if swearing allegiance, implies " a hearty renouncing of rebellion," etc., then the " all that are incensed against him" will swear hypocritically ; for no man can willingly obey a sovereign, against whom he is incensed.

The apostle Paul alludes to this passage in Romans xiv. 10—12, and Philippians ii. 9—11. Instead of inferring from it an universal restoration, he quotes it, in the former passage, as proving an universal judgment : " We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." Philippians ii. 9—11, must be interpreted as referring to the same event, to make the apostle a consistent writer ; for, if the words, " Unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear," mean, " Every one of us shall give account of himself to God," they cannot possibly refer to " willing obedience on the part of the rebels."

* Dialogues, pp. 21, 22.

It is worthy of remark that, for the word swear, used by the prophet, the apostle substitutes the word confess. The confession will consist of two parts: (1.) Every one will acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus, or his right to judge: "Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord;" no one will presume to dispute the authority of the court. (2.) Every one shall give account of his conduct. "Every tongue shall confess to God. So then, every one of us shall give account to God." It has been usual, in courts of judicature, to put the parties upon their oath, to secure the truth of their testimony. The prophet alludes to this custom. He must not, however, be understood literally, but merely as speaking with a reference to the truth of the confessions which men will make before the tribunal of God. No imposition will be practised there. Thus the prophet and the apostle are reconciled, and the weak subterfuge of the Universalists is cut off.

But this confession, says Mr. Winchester, must "imply a willing subjection to the authority of the Saviour, brought about by the operation of the blessed Spirit, because no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost."* The devil confessed, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Did this confession "imply a willing subjection to the authority of the Saviour, brought about by the operation of the blessed Spirit?" Why then, to be sure, the devil is already restored!

"We ask," says Mr. Vidler, "Are not the effects of judgment here represented, by every knee bowing to the authority of Christ, and every tongue confessing his government, so that the Father shall be glorified?"† I answer in the negative, and demand proof, if any can be given, of the affirmative.

Mr. V. proceeds: "You seem to think that the result of judgment will be only a forced submission to Christ, and a forced confession of his name; if this be all, it will rest with you to point out the glory which is to

* Dialogues, p. 22. † God's Love to his Creatures, p. 19.

arise to the Father from such constraint.”* This is very easily done. It is universally allowed to be the glory of a sovereign to administer justice to his subjects with an impartial hand, so that not one refractory rebel can escape being brought to justice and punishment, nor one faithful subject lose his reward. To say that there is no glory in such a conduct, because some of the subjects do not love their sovereign and his laws, is to make him accountable for their delinquencies, which is perfectly absurd.

“St. Paul assures us,” says Mr. Winchester, “that though all things, without exception, are put under him,” Christ, “in one sense; yet, in another, he says, ‘But now we see not yet all things put under him.’” But “he leaves us not in the dark about the matter; but speaks of that effectual working ‘whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.’ (Philip. iii. 21.) ‘And when all things shall be subdued unto himself, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all, in all.’ (1 Cor. xv. 28.) Here we plainly find a very necessary distinction between things being put under him, and all things being subdued unto him; the former is already done in the fullest manner; and the latter shall be as perfectly and as fully accomplished in due time; because the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know, that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”† (Rom. viii. 21, 22.)

I admit Mr. W.’s distinction, and believe that Jesus Christ will subdue all things unto himself; but how does the universal restoration follow? When a sovereign has subdued his rebellious subjects, are we to understand by it, that all of them are restored to favour, and that not one of them can be suffering in an exemplary manner? The connexion of 1 Corinthians, xv. 28, will show that by, “All things shall be subdued

* God’s Love to his Creatures, p. 19.

† Dialogues, p. 42.

unto him," is not meant, "All things shall be restored by him;" for in verse 25, we read, "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." This, then, is included in, all things being subdued unto him. But there would be as much propriety in supposing, that when a criminal, with a rope about his neck, is brought to the gallows, he will certainly be restored to civil society, as to suppose, that when an enemy is under the feet of a conqueror, he must be restored to favour. The apostle here undoubtedly alludes to the custom of conquerors treading upon the necks of their enemies. The captains of Joshua put their feet upon the necks of the five kings whom they had subdued; but this was preparatory to their destruction, not to their restoration. (See Joshua x. 24—26.)

Mr. W. seems to lay much stress upon the words, "That God may be all in all." It must be remembered, however, that it is said, Christ now "fillet all in all;" (Ephes. i. 23;) and again, it is written, "Christ is all and in all." (Colos. iii. 11.) Both these texts are in the present tense; and if Christ be now all in all, and yet many are now in misery; then the sovereignty may be transferred into the hands of the Father, that he may be all in all, and yet many may still remain miserable.

Romans viii. 21, 22, is cited to prove, that all things shall be subdued to Christ; but it speaks of deliverance, not subjection. Some have thought that this passage relates to deliverance out of hell; but a little reflection will convince any unbiassed mind that the apostle refers to the irrational creation. For,—

1. He says: "The creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly." Now, the rational creation was made subject to vanity, or trouble, willingly; for the sin of our first parents was certainly wilful. If it be objected, that their posterity are subjected to trouble, not willingly; I answer, that the apostle, by the word, was, evidently refers to the period when vanity was first introduced into the creation; and it can be true of the irrational creation, and that only, that at that time, it "was made subject to vanity, not willingly."

2. The apostle observes, that "the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now." And what are they groaning and travailing for? To "be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." This is true of the irrational creation. But no one pretends that the whole of men and devils had groaned and travailed until the apostle's time, to enjoy "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

3. Rational creatures in this passage, are distinguished from the creation. "For the earnest expectation of the creature," *tes ktiseos*, creation, "waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. Because the creature," creation, "itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit," etc.

4. The time of this deliverance is unfavourable to the restoration out of hell. The creation is waiting for, and earnestly expecting, the manifestation of the sons of God: when this event shall take place, therefore, their sufferings will terminate. Now, the sons of God will be manifested "in that day when I," Jehovah, "make up my jewels. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not." (Malachi iii. 17, 18.) The wicked will be existing then, as distinguished from the righteous; which could not be, were an universal restoration to take place at that time. The groaning of the rational creation is not for the redemption of their souls out of hell, but for "the redemption of their bodies" from the grave; which happy event will precede the judgment and punishment of the ungodly.

"If it be observed," says Mr. Vidler, "that putting under the feet of Christ, is not expressive of grace, but of wrath, we answer, this is an Hebrew mode of speech, and evidently expressive of grace; for the temple itself, as typical of the church, is called God's footstool."

(1 Chronicles xxviii. 2.)* In 1 Corinthians xv. 25, to which passage Mr. V., I presume, alludes, we read, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." All men being put under the feet of Christ, is expressive of his authority over them ; but the way in which his authority will be exercised, must be gathered from their moral characters. The gracious exercise of his authority over the church is inferred from the covenant relation in which he stands to it, as a holy church, and not from the circumstance of its being under his feet. But in the text under consideration, the apostle is not speaking of the church, but of authority ; and it surely requires a vast stretch of imagination to suppose, that when enemies are under the feet of a victor, their situation is expressive of grace. It is impossible to attach such an idea to Joshua x. 24—26 ; 1 Sam. xvii. 51 ; Isaiah lxiii. 3.

Mr. V. proceeds : " If it be said, that to be subdued to Christ, is expressive of wrath, we then observe, that whatever method may be used to subdue sinners, yet their being subdued, implies a state of grace and favour, for we are exhorted to be subject to the Father of spirits, and live. And the bodies of the saints will be changed at Christ's second coming, by that power whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. And even our Lord, when he shall have subdued all things unto himself, will then be subject to the Father."† The remarks made above, contain a sufficient reply to this paragraph. It is really astonishing, that a sensible man should talk at this rate. The saints are assured, that if they continue in a state of subjection to the Father, they shall live ; therefore, all conquered enemies must reap life everlasting ! The bodies of the saints will be raised by the power of Christ ; therefore, all subdued enemies must be raised to glory ! Jesus Christ will be subject to the Father ; therefore, all destroyed enemies must be restored ! Who does not feel the force of this cogent reasoning ?

* God's Love, pp. 27, 28.

† Ibid., p. 28.

When Mr. V.'s hand was in this work, it is a wonder he did not attempt to prove, from Luke x. 17, that the devils are already restored: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us, through thy name." He might have argued thus: the words are in the present tense; and "we observe, that whatever method may have been used to subdue them, yet their being subdued implies a state of grace and favour, for we are exhorted," etc.

Messrs. Winchester and Weaver, to show that future sufferings are intended to subdue and purge sinners, lay considerable stress upon Isaiah xxii. 14: "This iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die." When Job affirms, "Till I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me," he certainly meant that he would never remove his integrity from him; and by parity of reason, the prophet meant, that the iniquity should never be purged away. Thus we see the weapons of our adversaries are turned against themselves.

SECTION XI.

OF SIN IN HELL.

SOME of the advocates for endless punishment have asserted, that the inhabitants of hell will be sinning continually, by which means the quantity of their guilt will be continually increasing! the longer, therefore, they remain in hell, the further they will be from suffering what their sins deserve; their punishment, consequently, must be eternal. To this it has been replied, that the scriptures nowhere speak of punishment for any deeds, except those done in the body, and to attempt to justify eternal punishment, on the ground of sinning in hell, is to admit that it would be unjust, if inflicted for the crimes committed in this world. This is Mr. Wright's argument.* But Mr. Vidler affirms, "A rational creature cannot be without law, either in

* Examination of Ryland's Sermon, p. 49.

heaven, earth, or hell.”* If Mr. W.’s sentiment be adopted by the Universalists, Mr. V.’s must be rejected. For if the inhabitants of hell be under law, they must have moral liberty; if they have liberty, the law may be broken; and if the law be broken, the transgressor ought to suffer for it.

The scriptures represent punishment as being proportioned to deeds done in the body, and are entirely silent about laws by which the inhabitants of hell are to regulate their conduct. They may be incapable of moral obedience, through the loss of moral liberty. That moral liberty may be lost, through the strength of sinful habits, I presume none will deny; and that God is obliged to restore it as often as a creature is pleased to destroy it, I think an inhabitant of hell has scarcely temerity enough to assert; and to say, that the obligation to obey remains after the power to obey is lost, is to say, in other words, that an impossibility ought to be done, which is an absurdity.

“We see,” says archbishop King, “that our bodies may be maimed forever, and our limbs dislocated and distorted to such a degree, as to become totally incapable of those functions for which nature designed them. Why should we not have the same opinion of the mind, namely, that by depraved elections, passions, and affections, it may be so far diverted from the right way of thinking, as to become equally disabled and unfit for governing its actions, according to the dictates of right reason, as a lame man is for a race? If, therefore, God do not interpose his omnipotence, the same errors, the same ignorance, the same habit of a perverted mind and obstinate propensity to evil, which here draws us aside from the right path, may continue with us forever; nor will the soul, that is immersed in this kind of evil, be capable of curing itself. For one that is infected with these maladies is as unfit to help himself, as one that has cut off his hands and feet is unable to run or feed himself.”†

* Winchester’s Dialogues, Note, p. 77.

† Origin of Evil, pp. 510, 511.

That moral liberty may be lost, so as never to be regained, is proved from Hebrews vi. 4—6. Here is a state of mind described, which cannot be improved. It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. This state is illustrated by verses 7, 8. After land has received the rain of heaven, and the culture of the husbandman, if it produce nothing but thorns and briers, it is rejected as a soil incapable of improvement. So men who have been favoured with the gospel and the labour of the spiritual husbandman in this life, and yet have not brought forth the fruits of the Spirit, are rejected; their end is to be burned. Can laws be given to creatures who cannot obey them?

The influence and strength of sinful habits are well described by Mr. Addison: "Those evil spirits," says he, "who, by long custom, have contracted in the body habits of lust and sensuality, malice and revenge, an aversion to everything that is good, just, and laudable, are naturally prepared for pain and misery. Their torments have already taken root in them; they cannot be happy when divested of the body, unless we may suppose that Providence will, in a manner, create them anew, and work a miracle in the rectification of their faculties. They may indeed taste a kind of malignant pleasure in those actions to which they are accustomed, whilst in this life; but, when they are to be removed from all those objects which are here apt to gratify them, they will naturally become their own tormentors, and cherish in themselves those painful habits of mind which are called, in scripture phrase, "The worm that never dies." This notion of hell is so very conformable to the light of nature, that it was discovered by several of the most exalted heathens."*

It has frequently been objected against us, that if punishment be endless, the reign of sin will be endless also. It is a sufficient answer to ask, does thieving reign in that country, where all the rogues in it are

* Spectator, No. 447.

confined in prison? But if the Universalists still contend, that sin will be committed till punishment shall cease, I beg leave to inform them, that they admit a principle, which principle, in its consequences, overturns their system. Sin in hell deserves punishment, as well as that which is committed in this world. So that if we suppose a man deserves fifty years' punishment, for sinning fifty years in this world, yet, should he sin during those fifty years of punishment, he will merit punishment for fifty years longer, to expiate those sins, and so on, *ad infinitum*. But, did it ever enter into the head of any one, that a man is violating the laws of his country while suffering in a prison, in the stocks, or the pillory, for his crimes? On a review of the foregoing, it appears that the sinful habits of the damned are too strong to be eradicated in a way consistent with the relations which subsist betwixt God and rational creatures. They must, therefore, be miserable forever, since, by the divine constitution, no creature can be restored to happiness, who is not first made virtuous.

SECTION XII.

ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SECOND DEATH.

THERE is a famine in the land of promise on this article, otherwise, I suppose, Mr. Winchester would not have produced such passages as the following to support it: Psalm lxxxiii. 13—18; Proverbs iii. 35; Jeremiah xx. 11; xxiii. 40; Isaiah xlv. 16, 24.* If these texts favour the doctrine of the restoration, I think it may be proved from every verse in the Bible. It would be insulting the common sense of my readers to spend time in showing that these texts are irrelevant to the subject.

On Isaiah xxv. 8; Hosea xiii. 14; 1 Corinthians xv. 26, Mr. Winchester observes: "The second death

* Dialogues, p. 50.

is infinitely more the enemy of man than the first, and may therefore be considered as an enemy which God will destroy."* Mr. W. ought to have known that the apostle does not say, or mean, every enemy of man shall be destroyed : his words are, " He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." The obvious meaning of those words is, Jesus Christ will reign till every enemy to his government be conquered. I believe it would be as difficult to prove that the second death is an enemy to the divine government, as that a prison for offenders is an enemy to human governments. It appears from Matthew xxv. 41, that the second death, which is there called everlasting fire, is prepared by the Judge for the punishment of the wicked ; and it is not very probable that he would prepare an enemy to himself.

The sting of death is sin. " While sin remains in existence," says Mr. W., in the same page, " death will be able to show its sting ; but the time will come when death will have no sting to boast of ; therefore sin, and consequently death of every kind, shall be destroyed." The apostle is not here speaking of death of every kind, but of one kind only ; namely, of that which reigns over the body ; as is evident from the preceding verses :— " When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory ! O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?" It immediately follows : " The sting of death is sin." No man can doubt but that by " this corruptible," and " this mortal," is meant, the body. When it shall be raised to incorruption and immortality, then this victory over death shall be celebrated. But will not the resurrection precede the day of judgment ? and will not sinners be doomed to suffer the second death after the day of judgment ? How is it possible, then, to include any triumph over the second death in this song ?

* Dialogues, p. 61.

To what wretched shifts are men reduced, when they are determined to abide by a system, right or wrong! I was led to this reflection, on turning to Mr. Vidler's notion of God's love. (Pages 18, 19.) This gentleman says: "We allow that, in the first resurrection, it" (1 Corinthians xv. 54, 55) "will have part of its fulfilment, but we are persuaded that it reaches much further than the first resurrection, or even than the general resurrection." This is a bold stroke; but Mr. Vidler proceeds to the proof: "The apostle," says he, "introduces the doctrine of the resurrection on the largest possible ground. (Verses 21—23.) We understand the resurrection here in a threefold progression: Christ as the first fruits; afterwards, they that are Christ's at his coming; but every man in his proper rank. Here, then, are two ideas concerning the resurrection, universality, and order, to which the apostle adds another, (verse 49,) which is conformity to Christ in his resurrection state. Was it the righteous only who have borne the image of the first man, or have all mankind borne it? If all mankind, then will all mankind bear the image of the second man in his resurrection state, but in different orders (ranks) and degrees. Those who believe and obey the gospel, will have their vile bodies changed into the likeness of his glorious body, immediately on his second coming, as a sample of that mighty power, by which he is able (and we think willing) to subdue all things unto himself; but those who believe not, and obey not the gospel, will pass through the second death before they can receive their measure of conformity to Christ in his resurrection state."

Mr. V.'s comment on verse 49, is far-fetched indeed. Suppose I had written to a few pious friends, and informed them, for their consolation, that as we have borne the image of Adam, we shall also bear the image of Jesus Christ; what would be thought of a commentator, who should say my meaning was, that believers, and unbelievers, and damned spirits, should all bear the image of the Lord Jesus? The apostle, in

chapter i. 2, informs us who are included in this pronoun, we. He wrote to the church of God at Corinth, to them that were sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place called upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.

Mr. V. contends that some will have to pass through hell before they attain to conformity to Christ, and that they will not have completed this journey till long after the general resurrection; but the apostle says, "It," the body, "is raised in glory. When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption—then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." If this declaration will not be fulfilled till long after the general resurrection, this corruptible will not have put on incorruption till long after that event; but the apostle says again, "It is raised in incorruption." We conclude, therefore, that Jesus Christ will stand in no need of the fire of hell to purify and burnish the bodies of those who attain to a glorious immortality. If all, except the few whom Mr. V. calls a sample, have to "pass through the second death before they receive their measure of conformity to Christ," it must be granted that this song of victory will not be sung till many ages after the general resurrection; but I will show Mr. V. "a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, (for the trumpet shall sound,) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible," etc. In this mystery the following particulars are clearly discernible:—

1. That Christ will come (verse 23) and the trumpet sound, while some of the saints are alive upon the earth; for "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

2. That this change of the bodies of the saints, then found alive, will be instantaneous. "We shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."

3. That all who have a part in the resurrection here described, will be raised at the same moment.

"The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised."

4. That then, when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and the living saints changed, and not some ages after, as Mr. V. teaches, "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

From these four incontrovertible truths, I draw the following inferences:—

1. That Mr. V.'s gradual change, which is to be completed in hell, long after the general resurrection, is not the change which the apostle here intends.

2. That as the instantaneous change will happen when some of the saints are upon the earth, it will precede the day of judgment.

3. That when this instantaneous change takes place, death will be swallowed up in victory, and, therefore, will be destroyed before the day of judgment. Consequently,—

4. That the death which the apostle speaks of cannot be the second death, because sinners will be doomed to it after the day of judgment.

Mr. Winchester inquires, on Hebrews ii. 14: "Now what death has the devil power over? The death of the body, or that of the soul?"* If any person will be at the trouble to read the context, he can be at no loss for an answer. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." I presume no one supposes that the word "death," which occurs three times in this passage, is to be understood in different senses. I ask, therefore, what death did Jesus Christ die? Was it not the death of the body? Then it must surely be the death of the body which the devil has power over. The lake of fire, which the apostle

* Dialogues, p. 62.

John calls the second death, is the proper punishment of devils, and was prepared for them. (Rev. xxi. 8; Matt. xxv. 41.) If they had the power of the second death, no doubt but they would soon destroy it; Jesus Christ need not have died for that purpose.

"I am not able to imagine," says Mr. Winchester, "how St. John's vision (Rev. v. 13) could be just, if endless damnation is true. I should not expect any intimations, far less absolute promises, that God would destroy death."* Most of the Universalists urge this vision as affording demonstrative proof of the restoration. In reply, I observe,—

1. In this vision the apostle saw "such as are in the sea," singing this song. The Universalists acknowledge that the restoration will not precede the creation of the new earth. And in the new earth, the apostle remarks, there will be "no more sea." (Rev. xxi. 1.) This chorus must therefore be sung before the creation of the new earth; and since the restoration is supposed to take place at or after that time, the vision cannot be descriptive of the great year of jubilee.

2. It is a very singular circumstance, that at the time the four beasts, or living creatures, are prostrate before the Lamb, singing this song, they present "golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." What can the saints be praying for, when the whole universe is happy?

3. The apostle has told us when this song was sung: "And when he," the Lamb, "had taken the book," with seven seals, (see ver. i.,) "the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps. And they sung a new song," etc. (Ver. 8, 9.) This song ended previous to the opening of the seals; see chapter vi., where we find the four living creatures, who joined in this song, employed in unfolding to John the vision. Mr. W. and all writers whom I have consulted upon this vision, are agreed, that it is many hundred years

* Dialogues, p. 24.

since these seals were opened. If, therefore, their doctrine of restoration can be proved from this vision, it must have taken place from one to two thousand years ago.

On Revelation xxi. 4, Mr. Winchester observes: "Here is a state spoken of beyond all death; a state wherein sorrow, crying, and pain, shall be no more. This state is contemporary with the new heaven and earth, after the lake of fire hath ceased. Most certainly the word "death" here implies the second death; for we are informed, in the foregoing chapter, of the first resurrection. After this, we find that the dead, small and great, stood before God, and were judged; and such as were not found written in the book of life, were cast into the lake of fire, which is expressly called "the second death." In this chapter we find that all things are to be made new, and death is to be no more. But this must be the second death, for the resurrection of all the bodies, both of the just and unjust, had been spoken of before."*

All that is urged in this paragraph, as proof that by "death," in the text, is meant the second death, is this: "The resurrection of all men had been spoken of before." Does any man of common sense call this reasoning? Is it a thing impossible for an inspired writer to speak twice upon the same subject? There is no difficulty in this to an uninspired writer; for, in the middle of the above paragraph, Mr. W. observes: "Most certainly the word death here implies the second death; for we are informed in the foregoing chapter of the first resurrection;" and then, after a short digression, he returns to the subject again: "But this must be the second death, for the resurrection of all the bodies, both of the just and unjust, had been spoken of before."

The following affords presumptive evidence, that the word death, in the verse under consideration, does not mean the second death. It appears that all which the apostle saw, from chapter xx. 11, to chapter xxi. 8,

* Dialogues, pp. 62, 63.

inclusive, was one vision ; for the throne, and the person upon it, are the same in both places. In this vision, the punishment of the wicked is twice spoken of in the same terms. (Chap. xx. 14, 15; xxi. 8.) In both these places, the lake of fire is explained to be the second death. And if John meant the same in verse 4, it is strange that neither the lake of fire, nor the second death, is mentioned, but simply death. It is also worthy of remark, that the revolutions which will take place after the coming of Christ on his throne, are particularly specified in the vision,—as the fleeing away of the earth and heaven,—the resurrection and judgment of the dead,—the casting of the wicked into the lake of fire,—the creation of the new heaven and the new earth,—and the descent of the new Jerusalem from heaven ; but not a word is said about the quenching of the flames of hell, or of the restoration of the damned. Was it because that singular circumstance escaped the apostle's notice ? for he was commanded to write what he saw in vision. (Chap. xxi. 5.) But, to proceed to direct proof.

The exemption from death, sorrow, and crying, promised in verse 4, is the exclusive privilege of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem : “ And I John saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death,” etc. If the word “ tabernacle ” do not mean the same as the “ New Jerusalem,” yet there can be no doubt but that the tabernacle will be pitched in the New Jerusalem. The men, therefore, with whom is the tabernacle of God, must be the inhabitants of that glorious city ; and it is to them exclusively that the promise in verse 4 belongs : “ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death,” etc. The

question, therefore, is, whether all the human race, and all the devils will be citizens of the New Jerusalem. The apostle has furnished us with a sufficient reply to it. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." The promise, made to such as overcome, that they shall inherit all things, must mean all the blessings of the New Jerusalem state, which our Lord had just shown the apostle. The adversative conjunction but, shows the connexion of verse 8, with what goes before,—forms a contrast between the state of believers and unbelievers,—points out, in the most striking manner, their difference,—and demonstrates that the fearful, and unbelievers, etc., will not be sharers with those that overcome, in the privileges of that happy place.

After a description of the city, the apostle returns again to this subject: (chap. xxi. 27 :) "And there shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life." And all men and devils are not written in the Lamb's book of life. For, "whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." (Chap. xx. 15.) It is in vain that the Universalists endeavour to pull them out of the fire, and conduct them to the New Jerusalem; for the apostle declares, they shall in nowise enter into it. The poor subterfuge, therefore, about the restored entering into the city occasionally, is entirely cut off.

After a further description of the city, the apostle resumes this subject once more. (Chap. xxii. 14, 15.) "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For, without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers,

and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." The situation of those without, is described by our Lord in Luke xiii. 25—28. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets: but he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." Now, if it be said to the men of the New Jerusalem only, that there shall be no more death,—if many shall stand without the city, and shall in nowise enter into it,—if those dogs, etc., without, shall have their part in the lake of fire, and will there be weeping and gnashing their teeth,—and if, at every attempt to enter the city, they shall be ordered to depart, and be thrust out,—then, I hope, it is abundantly proved, that this vision is so far from affording any support to the restoration scheme, that it fully overthrows it.

As I have shown above that the second death will not be destroyed when the new heaven and new earth are created, Mr. Winchester must be mistaken in believing that the earth, when on fire, will be the lake into which the wicked will be cast; and that, as the earth will be purified by the fire, and be made a new earth, so devils and sinful men will be purified by it also, and be made new creatures. Mr. W. refers to 2 Peter iii. 7, in support of his opinion.* It is only necessary now to observe, that in the parallel case which the apostle introduces in verses 5, 6, we find that the bodies of the antediluvians perished by the flood, and not that their souls were purified; so "the

* Dialogues, p. 10.

heavens and the earth are reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men," not their restoration. It appears from this passage, as well as from Rev. xx. 9, that the wicked will be devoured by fire just before the day of judgment; but this fire will no more be a soul-purgatory, than that was which consumed the inhabitants of Sodom. In fact, we may as well talk about washing souls white with water, as purifying them by fire.

SECTION XIII.

ON THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIANS.

MR. Winchester, in his third dialogue, endeavours to show that christian experience naturally leads to a belief of the doctrine of restoration. He asks his friend, (p. 104,) "Did you not see yourself lost and undone, and that you were vile before God, unworthy of his mercy, and totally unable to deliver yourself from your sin and misery?" His friend replies: "I certainly did." Perhaps I am short sighted, for when I saw that I was lost and undone, that I could not deliver myself, and that I was unworthy of the mercy of God, I concluded, that as I had no claim on mercy, God might justly withhold it forever.

Mr. W. inquires of his friend again: "And were you not brought by the power of God to resign yourself into his hands without reserve, to do with you and dispose of you according to his will and pleasure, being convinced that he neither would nor could do you any injustice. O yes," says his friend, "and then I found peace." According to this experience, it seems, that when a man is persuaded God will do him no injustice, he will resign himself into the hands of the Almighty with peace and composure. But I ask, does not every man, who has just views of his condition, see that God would do him no injustice by sending him to hell? does he, therefore, feel himself resigned to go thither?

Is a conviction that God will do no injustice, sufficient to fill the mind with peace? Why then, to be sure, the inhabitants of hell are full of peace; for they can have nothing to object to the justice of God. I never yet was willing to be damned; I could not be satisfied till I received power to resign myself into the hands of God, under a persuasion of his mercy towards me through Jesus Christ.

After this resignation into the hands of justice, Mr. W. and his friend both "saw into the fulness, sufficiency, and willingness of Christ to save," and then they were "constrained to venture their souls into his arms." (Page 106.) And there may they rest forever!

But Mr. W. asks (page 108) the following questions: "Did you not see and feel yourself the vilest of sinners? Did you not view the love of God infinitely full, free, and unmerited? Did you not behold in Christ an infinite fulness, sufficiency, and willingness to save all, without exception? Did you not love all, and wish that all might come and partake of his grace? Did you not earnestly desire the salvation of all your enemies, and of all mankind? Did you not find it in your heart to pray for the salvation of all mankind, as for your own? If you had as much power as good will, would you not bring all to bow to the sceptre of grace, and to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ? Would you bring all to submit to God and be happy, if you could? and will not he, to whom nothing that he pleases to do is impossible, bring all his creatures to be reconciled to himself at last? He has infinitely more love to his creatures, than all the saints and angels in glory have."

I will take the liberty, in my turn, to ask an Universalist a question or two. Would you send a person to hell for an age, if it were in your power to do or not to do it? Would you not put an end to sin and misery immediately, if you possibly could? Would you not have prevented the existence of sin and misery, if you possibly could? Tell me now, in Mr. W.'s language, that God, "to whom nothing, that he pleases to do, is

impossible, has infinitely more love to his creatures, than all the saints and angels in glory have," and then say, whether these questions do not argue as truly against an age of misery, or even against its introduction, as Mr. W.'s questions do against its endless continuance?

But the fact is, the questions prove just nothing in either case; for since creatures do not stand in the same relations to each other that they stand in to God, they must not presume to transfer their feelings to him, and then make them the test of his procedure in the government of the universe. In all these questions, not a hint is dropped about man being a free agent, and God a moral governor; for such a representation would have prevented that influence on the passions which they seem designed to occasion. Sin flows from an abuse of liberty, and punishment is inflicted with a view to prevent that abuse in others, and thereby to preserve moral order. When a man is brought to the gallows for murder, you may meet with rogues and assassins, who would set him at liberty if they possibly could; but does it follow from hence, that the execution of such a man is an act of injustice?

SECTION XIV.

ON THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS.

"1. OUR Lord has commanded us to love all mankind, even our greatest enemies. But if God doth not love all himself, Christ hath commanded us to be more perfect, in that respect, than our Father who is in heaven."* We are commanded to love our brethren, our neighbours, and our enemies; but thousands of christians do this, without falling in love with devils and damned spirits.

"2. We are commanded to do good to all men, as

* Dialogues, p. 109.

we have opportunity.”* True. But what opportunity have we of doing good to the inhabitants of hell? If the Universalists will show us in what way it is in our power to serve them, we shall feel no objection to afford them all possible assistance; but it ought to be kept in mind, that the scriptures do not represent them as objects of mercy, but as monuments of wrath.

But it is remarked further, that we are commanded to “overcome evil with good.” (Rom. xii. 21.) And it is asked, will not God, then, overcome evil with good? And if he do, is not the restoration scheme true?† I ask, can we always overcome evil with good? We can only endeavour to do it, but must still leave men at their liberty, as God also does; for, though the goodness of God leadeth to repentance, yet some despise the riches of his goodness, and treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath. (Rom. ii. 4, 5.) And in the very passage in which we are commanded to overcome evil with good, the reason assigned is, not that God always overcomes evil in this way, but, because “it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

“3. We are commanded to forgive all men their trespasses, and to pray, saying, ‘Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.’ (Matt. vi. 12—15.) Now, is it possible to suppose that our Lord would command us, upon pain of his highest displeasure, to forgive those whom he hated, and determined to punish while he should exist, without having the least desire or design to do them good?”‡ God does not stand in the same relation to men, that one man stands in to another. And according to the difference of relations, the conduct must be different. Hence we may admit the premises, and yet deny the conclusion. A parent who hazards his life to save his child, only acts a part which becomes him, considering the relation in which he stands to it. But view the same man as a soldier in the field, and the case is altered. It is now his duty

* Dialogues, p. 110. † Universalists’ Miscell., vol. i., p. 312.

‡ Dialogues, p. 110.

to expose his life to destroy the enemy of his country. If God will forgive every offender, why has he annexed penal sanctions to his laws? or rather, why has he published any laws? If it may be inferred from the duty of forgiving injuries being enjoined us, that God will forgive all men; it will follow, that as we are required to forgive them in this life, God will forgive them in this life also; and then there will be no future punishment at all.

I cannot think that the precept to forgive, is to be understood in that absolute sense for which the Universalists contend; since God has instituted the office of civil magistracy to be a terror to evil doers. Now, if the precept to forgive injuries implied that we ought not, in any case, to seek redress by law, for what end did God ordain the civil powers? (Rom. xiii. 1.) But if our forgiving others implies no more than that we ought to be of a merciful disposition, and not to revenge injuries without applying to lawful authority, nor make such application with any other view than a regard to the interests of society, then this command can never be urged in support of the doctrine of restoration, because we have reason to believe that God has a regard to the interests of his creatures, considered as a whole, in punishing the wicked with endless misery. The fact is, that repentance in the offender is necessary to entitle him to a pardon. "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." Repentance is as necessary a condition to entitle us to the favour of God: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But if some may be so far lost to virtue, that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance, (Hebrews vi. 4—6,) then some will never be forgiven. And indeed we are expressly told, that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness—shall not be forgiven.

"4. We are commanded to pray for all men.*

* If what Mr. Wright says be true, namely, "that God cannot act towards any creature, at any time, but from a principle of love,"

(1 Tim. ii.1—8.) Observe, the apostle recommends prayer for all men; and wills that men should pray everywhere, at all times, and in all places, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. O what a word is this! May we, ought we, to pray for the salvation of all men, without doubting? Surely, God would never have commanded us to do this, unless it was his purpose to restore all men in his own time.”*

Mr. Fisher has given an answer to this argument: “As the will of God,” says he, “is the alleged reason why we are to pray for all; if the devils also will be saved, the same reason will equally apply to them also; and by a parity of argument, prayers, supplications, and giving of thanks, should be made for the prince of devils, and for all his infernal associates. But we have not heard whether the advocates for universal restoration are perfectly consistent in this matter.”

This brought from Mr. Vidler an avowal, that they do not pray for devils, nor for those men who have sinned the sin unto death. Now is it not very singular, after this, to hear him saying: “And upon the common parentage of Deity, and proof of it by the gift of Christ, he founds his proof of God’s determined good will to all men, in that he will have all men to be saved, by coming to the knowledge of the truth; and upon the whole of this he gives the precept to pray for all, as before noted, and confirms it again: (verse 8 :) ‘I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.’”†

I wish Mr. V. and his friends to observe, that the apostle does not say, I will that a few Universalists pray in faith for the salvation of all the world; but, “I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” Now, to come to matter

I cannot see what end can be answered by our praying for other people, or even for ourselves. If God be necessarily impelled to acts of love, what necessity for prayer? We might as well pray to him to be omnipotent, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, etc., as to be gracious unto us.

* Dialogues, pp. 110—112.

† God’s Love, p. 24.

of fact : do men pray everywhere in faith ? Do men everywhere lift up holy hands ? Any person of the least observation knows they do not. The natural inference is, that the will of God, upon this subject, as expressed by the apostle, is in thousands of instances awfully resisted. But if the will of God respecting the devotion and holiness of all men may be effectually resisted, then his will respecting their salvation may be effectually resisted also ; for no man can be saved without personal prayer and holiness.

But if it be still insisted on, that one man ought to pray in faith for the salvation of another, and that God is determined to save all men ; I wish the Universalists to answer me a few questions. Will God save all men whether we pray in faith for their salvation or not ? Or are believers necessarily led to pray in faith for the salvation of all men ? If it be the duty of believers to pray in faith for the salvation of all men, would it not be best to exercise that faith for them while they are in this world, and so prevent their going to hell at all ? But if some men are now in hell, and the Universalists are praying for the salvation of all men, are they not, like the papists, praying for the dead ? If the Universalists do not pray for the damned, how can their restoration be inferred from this passage ? It will not, surely, be asking too much, to request these gentlemen to be very explicit when they write again upon this subject.

Verses 1, 2, the apostle exhorts to prayer for all men, for kings and all in authority ; not that all may be saved, as the Universalists pretend, but “ that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.” He proceeds to remark, that God is willing all men should be saved, having provided a Saviour for them. He then commands “ that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” The obvious meaning is, that, since God is willing to save every man, every man ought to pray in sincerity and faith for his own salvation. The Jews, believing that the favour of God was confined to themselves, could not bear that the

gospel should be preached to the Gentiles. On the other hand, when the Gentiles saw the enormity of their lives, and considered that hitherto the Jews had been dealt with as a peculiar people, and that the Jews called them "dogs," etc., it is not surprising that they should doubt of their being admitted to the privileges of the christian religion, in common with the Jews. The apostle asserts, that Christ gave himself a ransom for all, and infers from it, that the Jews ought to pray for salvation, without wrath against the Gentiles, and that the Gentiles ought to pray for salvation, without doubting the willingness of God to give it. But what has all this to do with the doctrine of universal restoration ?

Having shown that the christian's duty affords no support to the restoration contended for by our opponents, I will now proceed to show that their doctrine has a pernicious influence upon the christian's duty, in some important particulars.

1. On our love to God. This will be in proportion to the quantum of misery from which we believe we are saved. Our Lord has laid it down as an incontrovertible truth, that, "to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Of course, a man, who is saved from sins which he believes deserved only limited punishment, will not love God so much as a man, who is saved from sins which he believes deserved endless punishment.

2. On our obedience. "This is" the effect of "the love of God, that we keep his commandments." But we have seen above, that the restoration scheme will not inspire us with so strong an affection for God, as the belief of having merited endless misery; it will not, therefore, inspire us with the same degree of zeal in the practice of piety and virtue.

3. On our zeal for the salvation of sinners. This will be regulated by our views of their future condition. No man will be so anxious to preserve his friend from the bite of a fly, as from the sting of a scorpion. I once heard an Universalist minister tell his congregation,

that one use of his doctrine to the saints was, it tended to relieve the mind of that extreme anxiety, which is occasioned by the thought of our friends being lost for ever. He informed us, that when he believed the doctrine of endless punishment, his mind was so affected with it, that, through excess of grief, his body was worn nearly to a skeleton ; but he assured us that the restoration scheme had afforded him considerable relief ; and indeed few of his hearers, I believe, felt themselves disposed to dispute it, since he then looked as fat and jolly as a king's beef-eater. This use of the doctrine, and of course the doctrine itself, appears to have been unknown to God's ancient saints. Instead of feeling little concern about the salvation of sinners, they sighed and mourned over them day and night. (Psalm cxix. 136 ; Jer. ix. 1 ; Ezek. ix. 4.)

The influence of the restoration system on hardened sinners, has been considered under Section IX.

On the whole, since it cannot be shown that the belief of this doctrine is calculated to improve a single virtue, and since it has been proved to have a pernicious influence, in many respects, on both saints and sinners, it may be presumed that it is destitute of divine authority.

SECTION XV.

ON THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

THE Universalists are agreed that 1 Peter iii. 18, 19, relates to Christ's preaching to spirits in the intermediate state ; but they differ as to the time when he made them this gracious visit. Mr. Winchester thinks that " the soul of Christ, in its disembodied state," went and preached to the spirits in prison.* Mr. Weaver, who wrote since Mr. Winchester, says, that " Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, went and preached to the

* Dialogues, p. 66.

spirits in prison.”* The reason of this change is sufficiently obvious to those who have studied this controversy. Christ’s local descent into hell cannot be inferred from this passage on any other supposition than that the apostle is here relating events in the order of time in which they happened; for if this be not insisted upon, the time of our Lord’s preaching must be collected from circumstances; and we find from Genesis vi., that the Spirit of God strove with them, or by Noah preached to them, while the ark was preparing. To cut off the force of this reply, it has been asserted that the apostle regarded the order of time in relating the events. Now in this order, 1. He was “put to death in the flesh.” 2. He was “quicken’d,” or raised, “by the Spirit.” 3. “He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” Hence his visit to hell has been supposed to have been made since his resurrection. It is not pretended, however, that the sacred writers always regarded the order of time in relating events; and till proof be given that that was the case in this instance, I proceed to observe,—

1. The apostle is not here speaking of the human spirit of Christ, but of the divine Spirit.† The same

* Endless Misery Overthrown, p. 29.

† Bishop Pearson remarks upon this text: “Those words of St. Peter have no such power of probation; except we were certain that the Spirit there spoken of was the soul of Christ, and that the time intended for that preaching was after his death, and before his resurrection. Whereas, if it were so interpreted, the difficulties are so many, that they staggered St. Augustine, and caused him at last to think that these words of St. Peter belonged not unto the doctrine of Christ’s descending into hell. But, indeed, the Spirit by which he is said to preach was not the soul of Christ, but that Spirit by which he was quicken’d; as appeareth by the coherence of the words, “being put to death in the flesh, but quicken’d by the Spirit, by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” Now that Spirit by which Christ was quicken’d, is that by which he was raised from the dead; that is, the power of his divinity, as St. Paul expresseth it; though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God; in respect of which he preached to those which were disobedient in the days of Noah, as we have already shown.”—PEARSON *on the Creed*, p. 253, 2nd edit.

Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, preached to the spirits in prison : " Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also he went and preached," etc. But the divine Spirit raised Christ from the dead. (See Rom. viii. 11 ; Heb. xiii. 20.) The pretence, therefore, of Christ's local descent into hell, derives no support from this passage.

2. Christ never did, nor ever will, descend locally into hell. I believe no one supposes he went thither prior to his death. He did not go thither in his disembodied state. For he promised the penitent thief, " To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise ;" and in his last address to his Father, he said, " Into thy hands I commend my spirit." If his soul went into paradise, into the hands of his Father, it did not descend into hell. He did not preach to disembodied spirits between his resurrection and ascension. The forty days which intervened between these events, were taken up in giving the disciples more full instructions respecting the christian dispensation. (Acts i. 3.) I do not know of any one who pleads for his descent into hell after his ascension to the right hand of God : there, he " ever liveth to make intercession for us."

3. The mercy of God towards the antediluvians terminated with their existence in this world. They " were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited." But when was this season of mercy ? " In the days of Noah." How long did it last ? " While the ark was preparing." (Verse 20.) How absurd, then, is it to talk about the gospel being preached to a people, after the long suffering of God, in relation to them, had ceased ?

4. Suppose we were to allow that Jesus Christ spent two or three days in hell, in preaching to the antediluvians, what must we infer therefrom ? That they were converted, when we know that by his Spirit in Noah he preached to them an hundred and twenty years in vain ? And must we infer that the gospel is preached to all sinners in the intermediate state, because it was preached to them ; and that all sinners will be restored,

although we cannot be certain that one of the antediluvians was ?

It is far from being clear that the phrase, "spirits in prison," denotes disembodied spirits in hell. When Jesus Christ preached the gospel to sinners on earth, he used similar language; he proclaimed "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound." (Isaiah lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18.) The antediluvians, while in the body, might be termed "spirits in prison," not only as they were slaves to corruption, but also because they were shut up in the world, as in a prison, under the sentence of destruction, till the day of execution. But the preceding observations are not affected, either by the adoption or rejection of this interpretation.

Mr. Winchester spends some time in proving, that by the "dead," in Peter iv. 6, is not "intended those that are spiritually dead only, but those whose bodies are dead."* This is granted; but it does not follow, that the gospel is preached in the intermediate state. The apostle's words are: "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead." Observe, the apostle does not say, "is," but "was." The gospel was preached to Abraham and the patriarchs, to Cornelius and his household, who are all dead. (Gal. iii. 8; Acts x.) No man infers from this, that the gospel is preached to them in their disembodied state. But, for what cause was the gospel preached to them that are dead? "That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." In the preceding verse, the apostle speaks of Christ judging the quick and dead; and the quick, as distinguished from the dead, may be here meant by men in the flesh. Now the quick, or men in the flesh, cannot be judged in any other way than "according to the deeds done in the body;" and since the dead will be judged in the same manner, they must, like those that are living at Christ's coming, have heard the gospel while in the

* Dialogues, p. 67.

body. If the gospel be preached to some men's spirits in the intermediate state, such persons must be judged according to, or as men in the spirit, and not according to, or as men in the flesh.

A similar mode of expression occurs in Ruth i. 8 : "And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house; the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me." By reading the context, no doubt can remain but that by "the dead," here, is meant the two sons of Naomi; and the kindness of her daughters-in-law to them, cannot, surely, refer to them when dead, but while they were living; for in what way was it possible to serve them, after they were laid in the grave?

The words of the apostle may be thus paraphrased : "For this cause was the gospel preached to them in this world that are now dead, that they might be judged according to, or as the men will be judged, who will be in the flesh at Christ's coming to judgment; and that they might live according to God, in holiness and happiness, in the spirit, during the period which shall intervene betwixt death and judgment." With this interpretation agrees the context. The apostle exhorts that we "no longer should live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God;" and again reminds us, that "the end of all things is at hand;" "Be ye, therefore, sober, and watch unto prayer." But if the gospel be preached in the intermediate state, the end of all things is not at hand; we may "live the rest of our time in the flesh, according to the lusts of men," and yet have plenty of time in hell, to learn to be sober, to watch and to pray. Whereas the words are very forcible, on the supposition that all means of salvation terminate with the present life.*

* Dr. Doddridge's paraphrase on this difficult text is as follows : "It was to this purpose that the gospel was preached also to the dissolute Gentiles, who might truly be said to be dead in trespasses and sins, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh ;

It is well known that many of the Universalists hold the doctrine of the sleep of the soul; this sentiment is perfectly inconsistent with the gospel being preached in the intermediate state: they might as well contend that the gospel is preached to stocks and stones, as to souls in a state of unconsciousness.

But what gospel is it which is preached in another world? Is it the same which is preached to us in this world, or do we look for another? If it be the same, it is addressed to free agents, its blessings are suspended upon certain conditions, and a failure in the performance of those conditions, involves a very high degree of guilt, which merits proportionate punishment. If, therefore, we grant that the gospel is preached in the intermediate state, the scheme of universal restoration is not helped by it, unless it can be proved, that every devil and every wicked spirit will improve the day of his visitation; but this is impossible. The probability

that they might be brought to such a state of life as their carnal neighbours would look upon as a kind of condemnation and death; but might live according to God in the spirit, might be brought to a truly spiritual and divine life: and if, when men hear the gospel, they will not receive and improve it for this important purpose, they must expect to render to God an impartial and severe account for their abuse of it, and must stand by all the terrible consequences of their folly." And the doctor observes in a note: "This interpretation, which is preferred by Brennius and Dr. Whitby, appeared to me, on a full examination, most probable; though the text must be confessed to be extremely difficult. Some have thought the apostle refers to those who then suffered martyrdom for christianity; as if he had said, 'It was gospel indeed, good tidings, even to those that died for it; for though men condemned their bodies, yet the salvation of their souls, which is of infinitely greater importance, has been secured by it.'" This last mentioned exposition of the words seems to be peculiarly worthy of attention. The gospel was preached to those that were dead, when the apostle wrote, but were alive on earth when it was preached to them, that they might be judged or condemned, with respect (*kata*) to men in the flesh; that is, that they might be judged, or condemned, and put to death in the flesh, by their persecutors, as Christ had been, and might thus be conformed to him in his sufferings; but, even after they were condemned and put to death, might live according, or with respect to God in the spirit.

respecting men, is on the other side of the question. They are more depraved when they leave this world, than they were when they came into it; there is, therefore, no likelihood that the same means which are ineffectual to their recovery here, will be quite sufficient for that purpose hereafter. It is certainly the design of the gospel to lead men to piety and righteousness, in order to their happiness. But is hell a situation favourable to the practice of these virtues? What saints will be found there to stimulate the inhabitants by precept and example to the discharge of these duties? In short, what room is there for virtue in hell? Must sobriety be considered as a virtue, where there is not so much as a single drop of water? Is honesty a virtue, where there is no property—no opportunity of cheating, defrauding, or stealing? Can the inhabitants of hell feed the hungry, clothe the naked, be fathers to the fatherless, and make the widow's heart to dance for joy? And if they be incapable of practising the duties of christianity, what claim can they have to its privileges?

The parable of the talents (Matt. xxv.) teaches, that the present life is the only day of probation. I believe it is not disputed, that the time when the Lord cometh and reckoneth with his servants (verse 19) is the day of judgment. "He then finds one of the three," says Mr. Horbery, "who, instead of trading with his talent, had hid it in the earth: that is, in the moral and application of the parable, had not made that use of his probationary state, and of the several powers, opportunities, the capacities (the sum of all which is represented by the talent) answerable and correspondent thereto, which he ought to have done. How now does his Lord decide in this affair? Does he, on this fair occasion, give the most distant hint that he will bear any longer with him, that he will try him once more; or, because he has failed here, remove him to some more advantageous situation, where he may stand a better chance for improvement? Directly the contrary; he takes the talent entirely from him; that is,

the whole sum of his powers as a moral and free agent ; and casts him into a place, agreeable to this state of moral inactivity, without light, or liberty ; without motive, inducement, or example to grow better.”*

“The instrumental cause of salvation,” says Lampe, “is the preaching of the gospel. But the word of Jehovah is restricted unto a specific day, to-day ; which once elapsed, the contemners of his word shall not enter into his rest : Psalms xcv. 7, 11, compared with Hebrews iii. 7 : ‘For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand : to-day, if ye will hear his voice—Unto whom I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest—Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation :—So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.’ But preachers are necessary in order to the preaching of the gospel. We are not, however, informed of any being sent to the region of the damned, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. If any were to be sent, it might be supposed that they would be of the number of the faithful. But this is likewise declared impossible, Luke xvi. 26 : ‘And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed : so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot ; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.’ There are here as many weighty reasons as there are words. Mention is made of a gulf, which alone is the indication of an impassable region. It is great by the very nature thereof. It is fixed by the unchangeable counsel of God. Nay, it renders the way impassable to them that would, and that from both sides. And Abraham urges this consideration above all, the very equity of the proceeding, which resulted from their former enjoyments. In which manner, both a moral and a physical necessity is indicated ; and also impossibility in every respect, through any new legislation of God ; or the least abate-

* Inquiry into the Scriptural Doctrine of Future Punishment, p. 46.

ment, much less freedom to be obtained from the chains of darkness. Can we imagine that Abraham would have been represented as so inimical to his own son, and unwilling to excite in him the least hope of the alleviation of his misery, if any could have been indulged? And was it not more agreeable to the infinite mercy of God, that he should cherish and strengthen the smallest sparks of divine love in one deprecating him, if any ray of it should have appeared?"*

Mr. Winchester says, "I believe that Jesus Christ was not only able to pass, but that he actually did pass that gulf, which was impassable to all men, but not to him: and he assures St. John that he had passed it; and not only so, but that he had the keys of the same in his possession."† (Rev. i. 18.) Jesus Christ assured the apostle John that he had "the keys of hell and of death," but he does not say "that he had passed" the gulf. Must we believe that every jailer, who has the keys of a prison, will certainly set all the prisoners at liberty?

But Mr. W. has much other proof that Jesus Christ crossed the gulf, and preached to the spirits in prison. After quoting 1 Peter iii. 18—20; iv. 5, 6, which passages have already been considered, he refers to Isaiah xlii. 6, 7. If Mr. W. had read on, he would have found that, not the inhabitants of hell, but the inhabitants of the earth, the sea, the isles, the wilderness, the cities, the villages of Kedar, etc., are called upon, to "sing unto the Lord a new song," for making this covenant with them.

"Christ was not only designed," says Mr. W., "to be a covenant of the people (meaning the Jews) and a light to the Gentiles,—which two descriptions comprehend all the living,—but also to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house, which (if it be not a repetition)

* Dissertation concerning the Endless Duration of Punishment, pp. 39, 40.

† Dialogues, p. 66.

must intend the dead, as all the living were mentioned before."* (Isaiah xlix. 6—10.) But why should Mr. W. doubt about its being a repetition? Is not the preserved of Israel, a repetition of the tribes of Jacob? Mr. W. says, the people means the Jews; if so, the preserved of Israel, and the tribes of Jacob, are both repetitions signifying the same people. And several other repetitions might be shown in this passage. If Mr. W. had only read the two next verses, he would have seen that these prisoners are not commanded to go forth from hell: "And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold these shall come from far; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim."

Isaiah lxi. 1—3, is introduced (p. 69) without any comment; as though it did not leave room for a doubt about our Lord's mission to hell. Jesus Christ preached from this text one sabbath day in a synagogue at Nazareth; and opened his discourse with this remarkable observation, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke iv. 16—21.)

Once more: "Our Lord Jesus Christ," says Mr. W., "by his process, hath laid a foundation for the recovery of all men; for to this end Christ both died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." (Rom. xiv. 9. Page 70.) Read the two preceding verses: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Mr. W.'s argument is this: those who live unto the Lord, and die unto the Lord, are assured that they are his both in life and death, for he is Lord both of the dead and living; therefore those who live unto the devil, and die unto the devil, shall be the Lord's!

Ephesians iv. 8—10, is cited (p. 72) without a word

* Dialogues, pp. 68, 69.

of comment; we have therefore to guess where the stress is laid. Is it supposed that the lower parts of the earth means hell? Then it seems the local situation of hell is at last determined! Yet we ought surely to have had some proof. The same phrase occurs in Psalm cxxxix. 15. It is there applied to the womb: "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." A similar phrase occurs in Matthew xii. 40, and is there applied to the grave: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Our Lord's soul being three days and three nights in hell, could be no sign to the scribes and pharisees; but his resurrection from the grave on the third day, was calculated to create full conviction of his being the Messiah. It is not material to determine whether the words of the apostle refer to the womb or the grave, for they are both equally unfavourable to a descent into hell.

Zechariah ix. 11, Isaiah xlix. 24, are introduced, (p. 73,) like the above, without any sort of proof that the pit intends hell, or that the captive is a damned spirit. David was in the pit, and Israel in captivity, but neither the one nor the other was in hell.

Psalm cvii. 10—16: "This amazing deliverance," says Mr. W., page 73, "seems to be described in such language as corresponds much better with the deliverance of the spirits from their dreadful prison, than with any temporal mercies that are bestowed on mankind here on earth." The deliverance here spoken of had taken place when the psalm was penned: "He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. He hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder." If this passage, therefore, prove the doctrine of universal restoration, that happy event had taken place some hundred of years before Christ appeared in the world.

I have, at last, gone through all the proofs which

Mr. W. offers, that Jesus Christ passed the impassable gulf, to preach salvation to those who cry in vain for a drop of water. Mr. Vidler has added notes to this part of the subject, which contain nothing remarkable, except a few Hebrew and Greek characters, from which we perceive that Mr. V. is a learned gentleman. His abilities, as a critic, will be examined under the last section.

What settles this point with me, is, if sinners may be converted in the intermediate state, we must give up that important gospel truth, that every one will be judged according to the deeds done in the body. For if sinners may, and some actually do, repent and obtain forgiveness betwixt death and judgment, they cannot be condemned and doomed to suffer the second death for the sins of this life. Bishop Pearson observes, "But neither they" (the dead) "nor we" (the living) "shall ever escape eternal flames, except we obtain the favour of God before we be swallowed by the jaws of death. 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body:' but if they be in the state of salvation now, by virtue of Christ's descent into hell, who were numbered amongst the damned before his death, at the day of the general judgment they must be returned into hell again; or if they be received into eternal happiness, it will follow, either that they were not justly condemned to those flames at first, according to the general dispensations of God, or else that they did not receive the things done in their body at the last; which all shall as certainly receive, as all appear, etc."*

The reason assigned in scripture why no means of conversion are, or will be used in hell, is, its inhabitants are incapable of improvement. (See Matthew v. 13; Luke xiv. 34, 35.) As salt, when it hath lost its savour, cannot recover its seasoning power, but is cast out as good for nothing; so men may be so far corrupted by sin, as to be incapable of a restoration to

* Pearson on the Creed, p. 270.

moral virtue; and without this they cannot be restored to happiness.

SECTION XVI.

ON THE PROMISE OF DELIVERANCE OUT OF HELL.

“THAT on which I dare venture the whole cause,” says Mr. Winchester, “is, that God hath absolutely promised to restore and bring again those whom he hath utterly destroyed.” But unless God can “absolutely” reconcile contradictions and perform impossibilities, Mr. W. must be “utterly” mistaken. Out of many instances which might be adduced in proof of this strange proposition, Mr. W. says, “I will fix upon one that is full to the purpose, and unexceptionable; and that is the case of Sodom and her daughters, etc. These wicked nations shall have their captivity returned; shall return to their former estate, and shall be received by Jerusalem as daughters, in the everlasting covenant; Jerusalem and her daughters, more wicked themselves than Sodom and her daughters, shall be restored at the same time. It is evident that the inhabitants of Sodom will be condemned in the day of judgment, and punished in the lake of fire; consequently the return of their captivity is not to be expected till after the creation of the new earth. See Ezekiel xvi. 53—63; Matthew xi. 24.”*

Were it not that the whole cause is ventured upon this prophecy, I should not have thought it necessary to pay much attention to it; but since such uncommon stress is laid upon it, I hope the reader will excuse a little prolixity. Let the following remarks be well considered:—

1. By Jerusalem and her daughters, is meant the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and by Samaria and her daughters, the other ten tribes. After the

* Dialogues, pp. 179—182.

revolt of the ten tribes, the king of Judah resided at Jerusalem, and the king of Israel at Samaria; hence, the two houses of Israel, as well as their countries, are sometimes designated by the names of these two cities. (See Isaiah vii. 9; Jer. xxxi. 5; Ezek. xxiii.)

2. The return of the captivity of Jerusalem and Samaria, or the two houses of Israel, will precede the day of judgment, and cannot be a return from hell. Their return and union are predicted by Isaiah, chap. xi. 11—16: "The outcasts of Israel and dispersed of Judah," can intend no less than the two houses of Israel. The prophet speaks of their reconciliation with each other, and of their restoration to their own country. These events have never yet taken place: the prophecy, therefore, remains to be fulfilled. They will not be gathered together out of hell, but from the four corners of the earth. This event, and some others mentioned by the prophet, cannot take place after the day of judgment.

The whole of Jeremiah xxxi. is a prediction of the return of the houses of Israel from their long captivity. Here God expressly declares, "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." Ezekiel cannot allude to a covenant subsequent to this, because this new covenant shall not be broken, nor shall the Jews cease from being a nation before God forever. (Verses 31—36.) There cannot, therefore, be a return from the captivity after this time. This restoration will not be out of hell, but "from the north country, and from the coasts of the earth." (Verse 8.) And when it takes place, "there shall dwell in Judah, and in the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks." (Ver. 24.) Jerusalem also will be rebuilt: "The city shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner," etc. (Verses 38, 39.) No one supposes, however, that men will be employed in tilling lands, feeding flocks, and building cities, after the day of judgment.

In Ezekiel xxxvii. 15—28, we have an account of

the gathering of the two houses of Israel from among the heathen into their own land, to possess it forever,—of their being united, and having one king over them,—of their increase of population,—of God entering into an everlasting covenant with them, etc. It is certain that this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, and it is as certain that the events which are here predicted cannot take place after the general judgment. This covenant, like that in chapter xvi., is said to be everlasting, and is, undoubtedly, the same. The return from captivity mentioned in chapter xvi. cannot refer to a period subsequent to this, because their apostasy after this time is spoken of as impossible. (Verses 23—26.)

3. The return of the captivity of Sodom and her daughters will take place at the time when Jerusalem and Samaria, or the two houses of Israel, return from their captivity: "When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy," Jerusalem, "captives in the midst of them. When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, then thou," Jerusalem, "and thy daughters, shall return to your former estate." (Verses 53—55.)

It follows from the above, that Jerusalem, Samaria, and Sodom will all return from their long captivity in their descendents. But Mr. W. says, "there are none of their," Sodom's, "descendents remaining on earth. All were destroyed by fire and brimstone; none of the inhabitants escaped, Lot and his daughters excepted, who were only sojourners." And I ask, is not every man a sojourner only, in whatever country he be situated? It is very probable that Lot intended to make Sodom his residence for life. He could not remove his cattle to a more fertile spot. (Gen. xiii. 10.) He had resided several years in the city, and some of his daughters were married and settled in it. By the destruction of the country, he lost all his property, and some of his children; but the captivity of Sodom

will be turned in the restoration of his descendents. The Moabites and the Ammonites descended from the children that Lot had by his daughters: "Thus were the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the first born bare a son, and called his name Moab; the same is the father of the Moabites. And the younger she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi; the same is the father of the children of Ammon." (Gen. xix. 37, 38.) We read of their restoration in Jeremiah xlviii. 47; xlix. 6: "Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the Lord. I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the Lord."

I think that the restoration of the land of Canaan and Sodom to their former state of fertility, is likewise included in this promise. The fine plain of Sodom was turned into a lake, now called the Dead Sea, when the inhabitants of Sodom were destroyed. And the land of Canaan, which was so noted for its fruitfulness, is now, by the unanimous testimony of travellers, a mere desert. When God shall bring again the captivity of Palestine, its fertility will be very great. (Amos ix. 13.) The land of Sodom was promised to Abraham for his posterity. (See Gen. xiii.) Before Lot separated from Abraham, "he lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord. And the Lord said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." Here we see that the plain of Sodom lay full in view; and since we cannot doubt of Abraham's obedience to the divine command, we are warranted in saying, that he took possession of it, by walking over it. But it is certain that neither he nor his posterity have yet enjoyed it: the promise, therefore, remains to be fulfilled.

The promise made to Jerusalem in verse 61, cannot well be applied to the persons only ; but if we suppose that the land of Israel, with the ten tribes, and the land of Sodom, with the Moabites and Ammonites, will then be united with the land and tribes of Judah and Benjamin, under one government, the capital of which shall be Jerusalem, the difficulties will vanish. We can easily see how Jerusalem can receive Sodom and Samaria, and how these sisters will then become her daughters. But if it be still insisted on, that the promise will only be fulfilled in the restoration of the ancient inhabitants of these cities to heaven, I hope we shall be told, how Jerusalem can be said to receive Sodom and Samaria,—how these sisters can be given to her for daughters,—and how they can all return to their former estate.

Mr. Winchester opposes the vision of Ezekiel, (chap. xlvii.,) to the promise made to Abraham ; because it is there said, that the deadly waters shall be healed, and that the lake shall produce an abundance of excellent fish. It would be a very easy task to show, that the vision in question cannot be literally realised ; but it is unnecessary. Mr. W. grants, that many people will be employed in the fishery, and that the fish will be more useful for food to the inhabitants, than all the vegetables that would grow there.* Supposing this to be the case, the captivity of that present useless lake will then be turned ; but people will not be employed in fishing upon the lake, and in drying their nets upon its shores, after the day of judgment. I dare say that, by this time, the reader will conclude with me, that if the whole cause cannot be built upon a better foundation than this prophecy, it must lie in ruins forever.

* Dialogues, p. 181.

SECTION XVII.

ON THE STRENGTH OF THE TERMS WHICH ARE
APPLIED TO FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

FROM observing that the very same terms are usually applied to future happiness, which are applied to future misery, Mr. Whiston gave up eternal salvation with eternal punishment. The modern Universalists insist "that there are many stronger expressions (even in our translation) to set forth the well-being of the righteous, than any that are used as connected with the misery of the wicked."* This is absolutely impossible. The English language does not contain stronger expressions, relative to duration, than eternal, everlasting, forever and ever; and all these are used to express the duration of the wrath to come. Since, however, it has been repeatedly urged, that the promises are much stronger than the threatenings, I have put down, in the left hand column below, the texts which Mr. Winchester thinks "will show us that the felicity of the righteous is promised in much stronger language than the misery of the wicked is threatened in the scriptures;" and in the opposite column, I have put down the texts which I think show that future punishment is expressed in as strong terms as future happiness. By comparing them, the reader will see, that the two doctrines must stand or fall together.

Israel shall be saved in Jehovah with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end. (Isaiah xiv. 17.)

An inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven. (1 Peter i. 4.)

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night. (Rev. xiv. 11.)

Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out. (Matt. v. 13.)

* Winchester's Dialogues, p. 29. Vidler's God's Love, p. 35. Wright's Examination, pp. 9, 10.

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved. (Heb. xii. 7.)

Neither can they die any more. (Luke xx. 36.)

I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. (John x. 28.)

Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. (John xi. 26.)

This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. (John vi. 50.)

Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not; where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. (Luke xii. 33.)

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? etc. For I am persuaded that neither death, etc., shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. viii. 35—39.)

Because I live, ye shall live also. (John xiv. 19.)

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of

They that go down into the pit, cannot hope for thy truth. (Isaiah xxxviii. 18.)

Neither can they pass to us that would come from thence. (Luke xvi. 26.)

But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. (Mark iii. 29.)

They shall never see light.—Their worm shall not die. (Psalm xlix. 19; Isaiah lxvi. 24.)

He that believeth not the Son shall not see life. (John iii. 36.)

It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.—If the salt have lost its saltiness, wherewith will you season it? (Mark ix. 41—49.)

Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. (Matt. xii. 32.)

Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.—It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. (Luke xiii. 24; Heb. vi. 4—6.)

Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born. (Mark xiv. 21.)

The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.—For this ye know that no whoremonger, etc.,

God, and joint heirs with Christ. (Rom. viii. 16, 17.)

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out. (Rev. iii. 12.)

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. (John vi. 57.)

Ye have in heaven a better, and an enduring substance. (Heb. x. 34.)

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. (Col. iii. 4.)

hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words. (Galatians iv. 30; Ephes. v. 5, 6.)

And there shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. xxi. 27.)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (John vi. 53.)

He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption. (Gal. vi. 8.)

Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go ye cannot come. (John viii. 21.)

If the common translation must decide this controversy, and it is that to which Mr. Winchester appeals, I feel no hesitation in saying, that every unbiassed mind will be convinced, from the foregoing contrast, that eternal punishment is as clearly revealed, in the sacred writings, as eternal happiness, and that both doctrines are established beyond dispute. But the common translation is supposed to be full of error on this subject, particularly in the rendering of the words *aion* and *aionios*.

It is surprising what pains the Universalists have taken to explain away the word *aionios*. Mr. Winchester, in his Dialogues, page 17, says it intends, a hidden period; in his remarks on Mr. Taylor's Sermon, (page 45,) he renders it "perpetual," "during a hidden period;" and again, (page 47,) "perpetual," "unceasing." Mr. Vidler says, it should be rendered "age-lasting." In Mr. Scarlett's translation, we read of *aionian* life, *aionion* punishment, etc. According to

Mr. W., therefore, the word contains in it two ideas,—perpetuity, and duration; according to Mr. V., it contains only one, namely, duration; and, according to Mr. S., it contains none at all; or, which is the same, its meaning cannot be known. Amidst all this confusion amongst pretended critics, what are the illiterate to do? It is most probable they will shut up their Bibles, as containing unintelligible jargon.

Let us suppose a poor afflicted woman reading in Mr. Scarlett's Testament, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *aionion* weight of glory." She is visited by Mr. Vidler, a christian minister, and the following conversation takes place:—

Wom. Pray, sir, what is the meaning of the word *aionion*?

Min. "Leigh, Kircher, Parkhurst, Schrevelius, and others, render *aion* by eternity, and *aionios*, say they, is eternal, everlasting. But I appeal from these great authorities, to the common sense of mankind, and affirm, that *aion* does not mean eternity, nor *aionios* eternal or everlasting."*

W. Indeed, sir, you must be a very great scholar: do be kind enough to tell me what *aionios* means.

M. "The proper idea of *aionios* seems to be age-lasting."†

W. Age-lasting! That is surely a fine dictionary word, which is spoken only by great folks, since I never heard it before. What must I understand by age-lasting?

M. "As *aionios* is derived from *aion*, and has relation to it as an adjective to its substantive, it can only describe something relating to that particular *aion*, or age, spoken of, and with which it is connected."‡

W. And pray, sir, how long does an age last?

M. "*Aion*, or age, is taken for an hundred years,—for the duration of a man's life, which is about seventy

* Dialogues, p. 25, note. † Ib., p. 27. ‡ Ib., p. 27, note.

years,—for any measurement of time, if its termination be hidden,—yea, even for a year.”*

W. What! cannot I be sure that *aionion* glory means more than one year’s glory? and does my fifty years of affliction and trouble deserve to be called light and momentary in comparison of this?

It is easy to see that the righteous have exactly as much reason to fear that the duration of their happiness will be limited, as the wicked have to hope that their misery will end. And surely when a minister is employed in administering hope to the hypocrite, and in making the hearts of the righteous sad, he is employed in a work very unsuitable to his character.

I must here inform my readers that I do not pretend to be a critic in the Greek tongue; and I should not have dared to follow Mr. V., the scourge of lexicographers, through his critical labours, had he not appealed from these great authorities to the common sense of mankind. I hope I possess a small share of common sense; I will, therefore, venture to examine his criticisms, and will bring them to this test.

“I affirm,” says Mr. V., “that *aion* does not mean eternity, nor *aionios*, eternal or everlasting, for which I assign the following reasons:—

“1. The above lexicographers allow that *aion* is taken for a hundred years,—for the duration of a man’s life, which is about seventy years,—for any measurement of time, especially if it be of long duration, or if its termination be hidden,—yea, for a year.”

“2. That the writers of the New Testament do not use the word *aion* to convey the idea of eternity is evident, because there are different *aions* spoken of, and one *aion* is represented as succeeding another. (Luke xvi. 8; xx. 34, 35; Ephes. i. 20.) Now we cannot possibly understand these scriptures as meaning this eternity, and that eternity.

“3. We read of the *aionion* covenant of circumcision; (Gen. xvii. 13;) the *aionion* covenant of priesthood;

* God’s Love, p. 31.

(Num. xxv. 13;) the *aionion* statute of the day of atonement; (Lev. xvi. 34;) etc. It would be an affront to scripture and common sense both, to ascribe eternity to these things merely because they are said to be of *aionion* duration.

"4. That the word *aion* and its derivatives, even when applied to God, do not convey the idea of eternal duration, may be still more clearly seen by observing that we read of a time before the *aions* began, and also of the end of the *aions*. (1 Cor. ii. 7; Heb. ix. 26.) I ask, can that word which admits of the existence of time before the period which it describes began, be expressive of eternity past? Can that word which admits of an end to the duration of the period which it describes, be expressive of eternity to come? If not, how do the opposers of the universal doctrine maintain the endless duration of future punishment, merely because it is a few times said to be *aionion* in the scriptures?"*

I will suppose Mr. V. has proved that the words *aion* and *aionios* do not mean eternity and eternal, in the texts to which he refers, though a critic would, perhaps, dispute it in some of the instances. But what follows? why Mr. V. would have all men of common sense conclude, that the words under consideration never mean eternity and eternal. Against this conclusion, however, it may be objected, that Mr. V. allows the word *aion* is applied to different portions of duration: "It is used," says he, "for a hundred years—for seventy years—for one year:" now he might as well say that, because the word is sometimes used for the duration of a man's life, therefore it is never applied to any other subject, as say, that because it is sometimes applied to subjects whose duration is limited, therefore it is never used to denote endless duration.

In our English dictionaries, the word *all*, is explained to mean, the whole, everything. But according

* Dialogues, p. 25—28, notes.

to Mr. V.'s logic, we may "appeal from these great authorities to the common sense of mankind, and affirm that it does not," and prove it thus: "The word all, is sometimes applied to men only; (1 Cor. xv. 22;) sometimes to a single nation only; (Matt. iii. 5;) and sometimes to a single family only. (Acts xvi. 33, 34.) The word all, therefore, cannot signify more than a part, and sometimes a very small part too." But is this conclusion just? Will it not be replied, that the word all, in the above instances, is applied to subjects which do not take in its full meaning? Does not almost every boy in a grammar school know that this is the case with words in general? Why then does Mr. V. insult our common sense by insinuating, that the words *aion* and *aionios* never mean eternity, and eternal, when he can assign no better reason for so bold an assertion than that, in some texts, they are applied to subjects whose duration is limited?

In Mr. V.'s way of proving, we may show that the word God, does not denote the supreme Being. Thus: "That the word" God, "when applied to" the supreme Being, "does not convey the idea of" a divine person, "may be clearly seen by observing that which we read of" magistrates, "I have said, ye are gods." "I ask, can that word which" is applied to men, "be expressive of" a divine Being? "If not, how do the opposers of" atheism "maintain" there is such a Being, "merely because it is a few times said" of some sort of a being, that he is God? But such a method of criticising is so obviously absurd, that I will not spend more time in exposing it.

On turning over to Mr. V.'s God's Love to His Creatures, page 32, I find the following remarkable passage: "We think it evident, that the longest *aion*, or age, mentioned in the New Testament, is of limited duration, namely, that of the mediation of Christ, which is said to be *eis ton aiona tou aionos*, rendered, in our translation, forever and ever. This age includes in it all others, whether they are past ages—this present age—or the ages to come; and this great age

of the age (so literally) shall of itself run out, and be closed ; for then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, etc. (1 Cor. xv. 24—28.) Here we are expressly informed of the end of Christ's kingdom."

I suppose Mr. V. refers to Hebrews i. 8. He has, however, taken for granted what cannot be proved, namely, that the *aion* relates to the mediation of Christ. The apostle refers it to his throne, as God, and not as Mediator: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." I believe the doctrine of the divinity of Christ has no place in Mr. V.'s creed ; yet it is established in this chapter beyond dispute. He is represented as the brightness of his Father's glory—the express image of his person—the creator and upholder of all things, being that Jehovah that in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, (Psalms cii.)—as a proper object of worship to angels,—and immutable. Mr. V. believes that the work of mediation will be finished at the creation of the new heaven and new earth, and the descent of the New Jerusalem : yet in this glorious city, where "there shall be no more curse," we read, that, "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it." (Rev. xxii. 3.) We see here, that Jesus Christ will have a throne after the work of mediation is ended ; and it is impossible to show that the divine Emmanuel will not reign on this throne through all endless duration.

Mr. V. says : "Here we are expressly informed of the end of Christ's kingdom." But the end of Christ's kingdom is neither expressed nor implied, either in the passage to which Mr. V. refers, or any other. Instead of the kingdom coming to an end, it is said to be "delivered up to God." It is the work of mediation that will come to an end at the time of the resurrection of the dead, (see the preceding verses,) and not the kingdom. The mode of administration will be changed ; the sovereignty will be transferred from the hands of a mediator into the hands of God ; and the Son, as God, though not as mediator, in union with the Father and

the Holy Spirit, will reign on his throne forever and ever. Instead of Christ's kingdom coming to an end, we are assured that "of his kingdom there shall be no end," and that it "cannot be moved." (Luke i. 33; Heb. xii. 21.)

Mr. V. observes, in another place,* on 1 Cor. xv. 25: "The happiness of the righteous will then," when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father, "no longer exist in the kingdom state, but in a more glorious state and degree, under the sole and immediate dominion of the Father." What silly nonsense is this! The Father will have dominion, and yet there will be no kingdom! When Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, does Mr. V. suppose that God will destroy it? or how is it, that "the happiness of the righteous will then no longer exist in the kingdom state?"

Mr. V. sums up all the argument in the following words: "On the whole, it follows, that *aionion*, as connected with future punishment, does not imply eternity of duration, but that there is an *aion*, or age, appointed for the punishment of the wicked; and therefore their punishment is called *aionion*, or age-lasting; and when that age expires, the punishment of it will cease."† Will it indeed? The happiness of the righteous is called *aionion*, in Matthew xxv. 46, and several other places. Now apply Mr. V.'s criticism to it: "On the whole, it follows, that *aionion*, as connected with future" happiness, "does not imply eternity of duration, but that there is an *aion*, or age, appointed for the" happiness "of the" righteous, "and therefore their" happiness "is called *aionion*, or age-lasting; and when that age expires, the" happiness "of it will cease." Once more: the life of the true God is called *aionion*, in 1 John v. 20. Now apply Mr. V.'s criticism again: "On the whole, it follows, that *aionion*, as connected with" the life of God, "does not imply eternity of duration, but that there is an *aion*, or age, appointed for the" life of God, "and therefore his life is called

* Dialogues, p. 28, note.

† Ibid., p. 28.

aionion, or age-lasting; and when that age expires, the" life of God "will cease!" "On the whole, it follows," that if we follow Mr. V. as a guide, he will deprive us of common sense—of endless happiness—and of God!

Having examined at the bar of common sense, the proofs adduced in favour of the limited meaning of *aion* and *aionios*, I must now attend to what Mr. V. has said about the old and new translation of these terms. "It is not a little singular," says he, "that when *aion* occurs as a noun, it should be so frequently rendered world; and when as an adjective, the sense should be, eternal, everlasting, ever, etc., yet so our translation runs. The impropriety of this will appear, if we take some of the passages, and inquire whether world and its relatives will do as a translation of *aion* and its derivatives. Matthew vi. 13: 'Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, to the worlds.' John vi. 51: 'He that eateth of this bread shall live to the world.' Chapter xi. 26: 'He shall not die to the world.' Revelation xiv. 11: 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up to a world of worlds.' These texts, to which many more might be added, are sufficient to show, that world is not a proper translation of *aion*, because in many places it cannot possibly bear that sense; but it may be rendered age everywhere."*

Render it age, then, in John xi. 26, one of the texts here referred to: "And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die to the age. Believest thou this?" Mr. V. observes, in another place,† "Whatever period the age of ages may be, the punishment is to continue to that age, not during it." Now apply his new translation, with this explication, to two more of the above texts: "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, to the ages, not during them." (Matt. vi. 13.) "He that eateth of this bread shall live to the age, not during it." (John vi. 51.) So then, during these ages, the saints cannot live, nor can God Almighty possess

* Dialogues, p. 26, note.

† Ibid., p. 48, note.

either kingdom, or power, or glory ! “ Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad ! ”

Mr. V., however, has proved, that where our translators render *aion* world, they could not properly have rendered it eternity ; and that where they render it ever, they could not properly have rendered it world ; and till Mr. V. can produce better proof than the above that it should always be rendered by the same English word, people of common sense will conclude, that they have done perfectly right in varying the English word, according to the subject to which the term *aion* is applied.

But I have not yet done with this paragraph. I insist upon it that the word *aion*, in the three first texts, cannot be justly rendered by any English word which imports less than eternity. 1. God will surely have the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, or to eternity, and not merely for a limited period. 2. The *aiona*, which denotes the duration of the life of the righteous in John vi. 51, cannot import any period short of eternity ; for in the preceding verse we read, “ This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.” Now, if he who eateth of this bread shall not die, he must strictly and properly live forever, or to eternity. 3. When the context of John xi. 26, is considered, the same word again cannot be limited : “ Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die ; ” *eis ton aiona*, that is, shall never die. The reason assigned why believers shall live, is, Christ is the life. This is offered to the saints as a security against death ; but it cannot be received in this light, if *aion* intend no more than a limited period : our translators have, therefore, very properly rendered the word, never. Revelation xiv. 11, will be considered below. Here, then, Mr. V. himself has furnished his readers of common sense with three texts, where the word *aion* means eternity. We may, therefore, safely assume, that

eternity is its proper meaning. This word, like others, is sometimes applied to subjects which do not take in its full meaning, and, according to its various applications, our translators have rendered it by different English words, always, however, giving it its full and proper meaning, where the subject would admit of it : and common sense, instead of charging them with "passing a deception upon the English reader," as Mr. V. invidiously does, will approve of their conduct, and admire their learning, judgment, and honesty.

Mr. V. contends that the proper rendering of *aionios*, is age-lasting ; and to this new coined phrase, he would have us attach the idea of limited duration. According to this rendering, then, we must read John iii. 16, thus : "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have age-lasting life." Now this makes the passage perfect nonsense. For if the life promised to the righteous be of limited duration, what security does it afford them against perishing ? Suppose ten thousand troops were to be disbanded, what would be thought of the following proclamation ? "His majesty has so much love to his soldiers, that whosoever hath served him, shall not come to poverty, but shall receive one day's pay, after he is discharged." Would not every man concerned in it think himself insulted ? And yet one day's provision is a better security against poverty in this world, than life for the longest limited period can be against perishing in the world to come. Apply Mr. V.'s translation to 2 Corinthians iv. 18 : "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are age-lasting." Now, since the things which are age-lasting are of limited duration, they must be temporary ; the sense, therefore, or rather nonsense of the passage, may be given thus : "We look not at the things which are seen, for they are temporal ; but we look at the things which are not seen, for they are temporary !" (See also Rom. xvi. 26 ; Heb. ix. 14 ; 1 Tim. i. 17.) Must not every

man be filled with horror at reading of age-lasting God, age-lasting Spirit, and the King age-lasting? Can either common sense, or the smallest spark of piety short of atheism, endure such wretched criticisms? The reader will not be surprised that Mr. Scarlet has given no translation of this word in his New Testament, since to have used any term expressive of limited duration, in the above, and many other instances, would have exposed his want of common sense. After all, therefore, we may venture to abide by the decision of those great authorities which Mr. V. has treated with such sovereign contempt.

But Mr. V. says: "As for the eternity of God, we learn it from the necessity of his existence." But why does Mr. V. run from revelation to necessary existence, to prove the eternity of God? Is it because the eternity of God is not taught in scripture? How then can immortality be brought to light by the gospel? But what do the illiterate know about necessary existence? are they qualified for metaphysical disquisition? All the other divine perfections, taught by the light of nature, are still more clearly revealed in the scriptures; how happens it, then, that in this solitary instance, the perfect word of God is imperfect?

Yet still, perhaps, it will be objected: "Suppose it be granted, that the proper meaning of the word is eternal; yet, since it is sometimes applied to subjects whose duration is limited, the application of it to future punishment does not of itself prove that punishment to be eternal." To this I answer: 1. No word should be interpreted in an improper sense, unless there be something in the subject which renders such an interpretation necessary; but we can see nothing in the nature of future punishment from whence we can infer that it will not be endless. 2. The connexion in which the word stands, when applied to this subject, determines the sense of it to be eternal. (See Mark iii. 29.) Here its meaning is determined by the phrase, "hath never forgiveness." The evangelist Luke also observes of this blasphemy, "it shall not be forgiven." (Luke xii. 10.) An *aionian* punishment, for a sin that hath never

forgiveness, and that shall not be forgiven, must necessarily be endless.

The words which, in the common translation of the New Testament, are rendered forever and ever, are used three times in relation to the punishment of the wicked. See Rev. xiv. 11; xix. 3; xx. 10. In the first of these texts, the articles are wanting; but that circumstance by no means diminishes its force. This form of expression cannot mean less than proper eternity; for the duration of the divine existence—of the glory, and wisdom, and honour, and power ascribed to God, by saints and angels—and of the homage they pay to him—are all expressed by it. (See 1 Tim. i. 17; Rev. iv. 9, 10; vii. 12, etc.) The objections to the words meaning endless duration, when applied to the punishment of impenitent sinners, are so very weak that I should not condescend to pay them any attention, were it not that the parties would perhaps complain of the neglect, and have the assurance to bring them forward again. They are, therefore, put down and replied to in the following order.

1st. "If forever and ever is a longer time than for ever, which must be granted, then is there some proportion between them; but any proportion at all between two periods, supposes both to have an end, or there could be no proportion."* We do not grant that forever and ever is a longer period than forever. Our Lord sometimes prefixes to his discourses the words verily, verily, sometimes only verily. But does any man suppose, from this circumstance, that there is a greater degree of truth in some of his discourses than in others, and that there is absolute truth in none of them? Yet this conclusion would be as just as Mr. Winchester's, that forever and ever, is a longer period than forever, and that, therefore, neither of these phrases mean endless duration. It is not surely pretended that the vanity of vanities in Ecclesiastes i. 2, signifies more emptiness than simple vanity. Instances might be multiplied, but it is unnecessary.

* Dialogues, p. 9.

2nd. "I find a time promised when there shall be no more death,"* etc. (Rev. xxi. 4, 5.) This text has been considered already. Section xii.

3rd. Mr. Winchester draws an argument from 2 Peter iii. 5—12.† But it is shown under Section xii., that "the earth, in its burnt, melted, and dissolved state," will not be the second death. It does not therefore follow, that when the new heaven and new earth are created, the punishment of the wicked will cease.

4th. "They are to be tormented day and night, for ever and ever. But it is intimated in Job xxvi. 10, Revelations xxi. 25, that day and night shall come to an end."‡ But whoever supposed before, that when sinners are said to have "no rest day nor night," any other idea was intended to be conveyed, than that their punishment shall be without intermission. If the day and night must be understood literally, why not also Matthew xxv. 30; Jude 13? but who can then reconcile day and night, with utter darkness, and with the blackness of darkness forever?

Mr. Vidler has added to the absurdity by pretending, in a long note,§ that darkness of every "kind, whether spiritual or material, stands opposed to God;" that "in the present state, where neither absolute good nor absolute evil takes place without mixture, there is also a mixture of light and darkness in the revolution of day and night;" "that in the new Jerusalem state, where the servants of God are totally delivered from mental darkness, there will be continual light, to the total exclusion of darkness." (Rev. xxi. 25.) And that "in the future age of punishment there will still be the revolution of day and night even to the age of ages; to intimate, perhaps, that however severely the wicked may be punished, yet it will by no means be inconsistent with mercy and love; but that the divine Spirit will continue to operate in reconciling sinners to God, until their darkness be expelled by his shining into their

* Dialogues, p. 9.

† Ibid., p. 10.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid., p. 11, note.

hearts. And when all shall be filled with the effulgent glory of him who is the image of God, then darkness, both spiritual and material, will be entirely destroyed."

Natural and spiritual darkness, it seems, were born together, and must die together! But was there no natural darkness in this world, before the introduction of sin? was there no measurement of time, by day and night, previous to that period? did our mother Eve, by eating the forbidden fruit, so far disturb the frame of nature, as to give the world its diurnal motion? This mixture of light and darkness in the revolution of day and night, Mr. V. pretends, intimates a mixture of mercy and love with their punishment; but the apostle has told us, in the same paragraph where he says "they have no rest day nor night," that they "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture."

5th. "But the great reason of all, why I do not conceive that forever and ever doth certainly intend endless duration, is, because I find the words as often used for times and periods that must have an end, as you find them used for the misery of the wicked."* Mr. W. refers to Isaiah xxx. 8; Jeremiah vii. 1, 7; xxv. 5. But not to mention that the phrase *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, occurring so often in the New Testament, and rendered in our translation forever and ever, is not found in any of those passages, nor, I believe, in any other, in the Septuagint (or Greek) version of the Old Testament; the present inquiry is not about the meaning of the Hebrew words in the Old Testament, but of the Greek in the New. And as to this point, instead of "bringing three texts where the words are used in a limited sense, to invalidate the evidences for endless damnation, drawn from the three passages where they are used in relation to that subject," he only introduces one, namely Hebrews i. 8. But I have shown above that this text cannot be proved to intend less than endless duration: and we challenge the Universalists to produce a single instance

* Dialogues, p. 12.

out of the New Testament, where this phrase must be understood with some restriction. This has not yet been done, and we firmly believe it to be impossible. And surely it is without all shadow of reason, to pretend that these words intend a limited period when applied to future punishment, and yet be unable to bring forward one text where they have such a meaning when applied to other subjects. But suppose three, or threescore instances could be produced out of the New Testament, of the phrase in question being applied to subjects whose duration is limited, this would not prove, that endless duration is not its proper meaning; for, as I have observed before, it is common for words in general to be applied to subjects which do not take in their full meaning. I am so confident of the truth of this remark, that I do not hesitate to say, the Universalists cannot controvert it without betraying ignorance of the first rudiments of general grammar, and exposing their criticisms to the derision of every school-boy.

6th. Mr. Vidler alters the translation thus, to the age of ages, and observes upon it, "Whatever period this may be, the punishment is to continue to that age, not during it."* This is making short work of it indeed! But what necessity then to trouble ourselves at all about the duration of the age of ages? If the punishment of sinners be to continue only to that age, not during it, it is of no importance in this controversy, whether that age means eternity or a day. Dare Mr. V. apply his criticism to Revelations v. 13, 14? Must we say, that saints and angels will worship God to that age, not during it? and that God himself will live to that age, not during it?

7th. Mr. V. informs us in the next paragraph, that "the age of ages in the New Testament has clearly a reference to the jubilee in the Old Testament; and what this is in the type, that is in reality. As the jubilee gave universal liberty to all who were in servitude, exonerated every obligation from those who were in

Dialogues, p. 48, note.

debt, and returned every man to his inheritance; the commencement of the age of ages will give spiritual liberty to every captive who is confined in the prison-house, relieve every one who is burdened with guilt, and restore every one to the enjoyment of the divine favour, which is the proper inheritance of every rational creature."

It is not quite certain that "the jubilee gave universal liberty to all who were in servitude." Many have thought that the servant mentioned in Exodus xxi. 6, is an exempt case. And it is very clear that the heathen slaves were not to be released at the year of jubilee; for just after the law to set the Hebrew servants at liberty at that time, it is added, "Thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever." (Lev. xxv. 44—46.) Here the word ever is opposed to the jubilee. Hence Lampe observes, "If any one were disposed to use trivial and strained arguments, he might defend the contrary opinion from this passage."

Mr. V. has exceeded the bounds of truth in saying, that "the jubilee returned every man to his inheritance." Both houses and land might be sold upon such terms as not to return again to the original proprietors in the year of jubilee: "And if a man sell a dwelling-house in a walled city, and it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city, shall be established forever to him that bought it, throughout his generations: it shall not go out in the jubilee. And if he will not redeem the field, or if he have sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed any more. But the field when it goeth out in the jubilee, shall be holy unto the Lord, as a field devoted: the possession thereof shall be the priest's." (Lev. xxv. 29, 30; xxvii. 20, 21.) But what inheritance have the damned to return to? We know who hath said, "that no

whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words." (Ephes. v. 5, 6.)

Mr. V. is wrong again in intimating that the spiritual jubilee will "exonerate every obligation from those who are in debt, and give spiritual liberty to every captive who is confined in the prison house;" for our Lord declares, "I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite." (Luke xii. 59.)

But what is there to support the notion that the jubilee is a type of the age of ages? Another will perhaps ere long start up, and carry the analogy a little farther than Mr. V. has done. He may with equal truth, affirm that, as there were many returns of the jubilee, so there will be many returns of the age of ages; and that, as men, who were set at liberty in the year of jubilee, might afterwards sell themselves as slaves, so devils and wicked men, who will be set at liberty when the age of ages commences, may afterwards sell themselves to work wickedness, and again become wretched. In short, where shall we stop, if every type which a fertile imagination can invent, is to set aside the plainest texts of scripture?

What reasons are here brought forward to justify a limited sense and a new translation of *aion aionos*, and *eis tous aionas ton aionon*! It is surely a pity we are not all critics, and capable of embellishing our pages with Greek characters—what wonderful things we might bring to light! By introducing words into a work from the dead languages, the vulgar are led to consider the author as a man of learning, and on that ground to attach a degree of importance to his production, which it often ill deserves. From the preceding pages, it appears a very easy task to appreciate Mr. V.'s abilities as a critic. His perpetual play upon Greek words may mislead the illiterate and unwary, while it must disgust the intelligent and considerate. It is difficult to suppose how a man could venture to send such absurdities abroad, who is not blinded by

vanity. The contempt with which he treats all the lexicographers, and our venerable translators, together with the scepticism which his notes are calculated to occasion amongst the ignorant and the wicked, forbid him the privilege, which is due to mistaken piety and modesty, of receiving only a slight censure.

The passages of scripture which prove endless punishment are so numerous, that this section might easily be swelled into a volume ; but I will only bring forward two or three more, which Mr. Winchester has taken very great pains to explain away.

Matthew xii. 31, 32 ; Mark iii. 28, 29 ; Luke xii. 10 ; Hebrews vi. 4—6 ; x. 26—29, have all been considered as affording very strong proof of endless punishment. Upon these passages Mr. W. remarks : “ There is no kind of dispute between us, respecting the certainty of the punishment of such ; the question is, shall there ever come a time when the second death shall no more exist ? If this can be proved, the conclusion will be evident, namely, that not one shall remain under the power thereof to all eternity ; upon this, and this alone, depends the solution of this awful, interesting, and most important question ; and I consider all other answers as mere quibbles, compared with this. And if it cannot be proved that a time will come, when all that bears the name of death shall be destroyed, those who commit the sin unto death, must, at least, be allowed to stand as exceptions to the general rule ; and I am apt to think that the rule itself will be overthrown.”* His proof that the second death shall be destroyed, is shown to be inconclusive under Section xii. ; it follows, that his rule is overthrown, and that the above texts prove endless misery.

Matthew xxvi. 24 ; Mark xiv. 21, have usually been urged as affording decisive evidence of the proper eternity of future punishment : for should Judas be restored at any future period, and thenceforward enjoy endless happiness, it will be good for him that he was born ; contrary to the express words of our Lord.

* Dialogues, p. 60.

Mr. Winchester says, page 78, "It was a common proverb among the Jews, when any great misfortune happened to a man or his family, to say, 'Good were it for that man, if he had never been born.' And thus our Saviour used it with great propriety respecting Judas: for who, that thinks with any reason at all, would not have wished that he had never been born, rather than to have betrayed the dear Redeemer." Supposing it were a common proverb among the Jews, when any great misfortune happened to a man, to say, "Good were it for that man, if he had never been born," it does not follow that our Lord used these words in their sense. They are not merely a common proverb, but a divine truth, when uttered by him. Yet Mr. Vidler, in a note,* remarks: "It becomes those who maintain the doctrine of endless misery to consider how weak a foundation a common proverb is, to support such a tremendous idea." Perhaps Judas might consider these words in this light, as a weak, common proverb, which deserved little or no attention.

Mr. W. asks, "Who would not have wished that he had never been born, rather than to have betrayed the dear Redeemer?" But the "great misfortune" in this case did not happen to the betrayer, but to the betrayed. Perhaps, however, Mr. W. refers to Judas's death. Yet what "great misfortune" could Mr. W. see in this? If, as he observes, Judas "perished probably, by his own hands," his death was his sin, not his misfortune. If Mr. W. refers to his "great misfortune" of going to hell, the balance of good and evil is no longer limited to this life; and if we extend it to futurity, it would not have been good for him to have never been born, if the doctrine of universal restoration be true; for the evil of the greatest sufferings for the longest limited period, bears no proportion to the good of the endless happiness which follows.

Mr. V., however, supposes "Judas did not perish by his own hands." He explains the matter thus: "Judas had seen the miracles of Jesus, and was highly

* Dialogues, p. 87.

impressed with a sense of his power; he had seen his modesty and humility, and, like the kinsmen of our Lord, could not reconcile his character of Messiah with his low condition and love of privacy. (See John vii. 3, 4.) Might he not think that if he could bring his Master into such circumstances as should cause him to avow his character openly, and to take the kingdom, that he should even do a good work? that then he should not only be forgiven, but even highly rewarded, as having shown his love to Jesus? The smallness of the reward which he had from the rulers, seems to show, that he had hopes much beyond that. That Judas did not think of any harm to his Master, is evident from Matthew xxvii. 3. I do not see but that Judas loved his Master as really as Peter and the other disciples; but being more deeply tinctured with ambition to possess the temporal honours of the kingdom, he fell more deeply than they; and seeing the design of his plan frustrated, and the life of his beloved Master in danger, he made every reparation which a sincere but mistaken man could make; he avowed the innocence of Jesus, confessed his own guilt, returned the money with abhorrence; and, so great was his grief, that it strangled him; he fell down on his face, and his bowels gushed out.”*

What pains are here taken to wash the Æthiop white! but it is all to no purpose. It is remarkable that, just after our Lord had pronounced the dreadful woe, it is added, “Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.” From this it appears very evident, that Judas had a faithful warning of the wickedness of betraying Christ, and of the fearful consequences which would follow. How is it possible after this, that he could suppose “he should even do a good work;” or, that “he should not only be forgiven, but even highly rewarded, as having shown his love to Jesus?” And how can Mr. V. reconcile this faithful warning with his assertion, that Judas was “a sincere but mistaken

* Dialogues, p. 82, note.

man?" A sincere but mistaken man, is a man of pure principles, who, through ignorance, errs in conduct. But it is impossible to apply this to Judas; for he went out from our Lord to the priests with this warning sounding in his ears.

The smallness of the reward is considered as an argument against Judas's covetousness. It might with propriety have been urged as a proof of his extreme depravity; but if he were disinterested, why should he ask a reward at all? Why inquire, What will ye give me? Is it a new thing in the earth for men to do a great deal of mischief with the hope of but little gain? We have satisfactory proof of Judas's covetousness in John xii. 4—6.

But "Judas did not think of any harm to his Master." Psalm cix. 6—19, is a prediction respecting Judas, delivered in the form of an imprecation. (See Acts i. 16, 20.) Now, if we may believe this prediction as having been accomplished, Judas "persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart." (Ver. 16.)

Mr. V. thinks that "Judas loved his Master as really as Peter and the other disciples." He does not, however, offer any proof of this strange position. Instead of loving Christ, he is said to have loved cursing. (Psalm cix. 17.)

"That he is gone to hell," says Mr. V., "I cannot learn from the scriptures."* If he cannot learn this from Acts i. 20, he may from John xiii. 11; xvii. 11, 12. A man that is not clean, and that is lost from Christ, cannot surely be in heaven. Mr. V. thinks that his repentance was evangelical. But David prophesied of him, that his prayer would become sin, and that when judged, he should be condemned. (Psalm cix. 7.) This account is perfectly irreconcilable with evangelical repentance.

But if Judas was as good a man as Mr. V. would have us to believe he was; if the only defect in his character was a deeper taint of ambition than was

* Dialogues, p. 83, note.

common to the apostles ; and if he obtained, in this world, forgiveness of his sin ; it is demanded, in the name of reason, in what sense can it be true, that it would have been good for him if he had not been born ? Shall we say, on account of his "fearful end ?" But what was there in his end so fearful ? Death occasioned by the depth of evangelical repentance, is to be coveted rather than dreaded ; for it secures a glorious immortality. Shall we say, on account of his painful end ? The pain of suffocation could not be equal to the pain of crucifixion, which some of the apostles suffered ; would it not therefore have been still more appropriate, if our Lord had addressed the words in question to those of the apostles who he foresaw would be persecuted to death ? Shall we say, on account of his disgraceful end ? But is evangelical repentance disgraceful ? Is it not, rather, honourable ?

How curious it is to hear this rational divine talk about evangelical repentance occasioning death ! Jesus said, he came not into the world to destroy men's lives ; and yet Mr. V. believes he preached an evangelical repentance which sometimes, at least, causes death. But did not our Lord understand the effects which his doctrines were likely to produce ? A distinction is made between godly sorrow, and the sorrow of the world, in 2 Corinthians vii. 9, 10 ; the former does no damage, it worketh repentance unto salvation ; it is the latter which worketh death.

Mr. Winchester spends nearly four pages about Job and Jeremiah, cursing the day of their birth ; but he frankly acknowledges, page 85, that they "uttered such rash words as, in their cooler moments, they repented of ; and therefore what they spake of themselves cannot wholly" (no nor yet in part) "set aside the objection."

On Matthew xxiv. 19 ; Mark xiii. 17 ; Luke xxi. 23 ; xxiii. 27—31, Mr. W. observes, page 86, "Who would not, a thousand times, choose rather never to have been born, than even to see, far less experience, the miseries which came upon Jerusalem and its inha-

bitants?" No man in his sober senses, if the doctrine of universal restoration be true. But it is neither said of the women, nor yet of the people of those times, "It had been good for them if they had not been born."

Page 86: "Solomon not only represents a state of great misery and affliction in this life, as worse than not to have been born, but also a state of the greatest prosperity, if it end in disgrace." (Eccles. vi. 3—6.) But do the words, untimely birth, signify the same as not being born? We might as well say that premature light means darkness.

Mr. W. grants that Mark ix. 43—49, "is certainly a most terrible passage." He proceeds, page 46, "There is no doubt but Jesus Christ had his eye upon Isaiah lxvi. 24. This prophecy shall be fulfilled when the children of Israel shall return and be settled in their own land." (See Ezek. xxxix. 4—12; Zech. xiv. 16; Isaiah lxvi. 21; Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 19.) The worm is not once mentioned in any of these passages, and the fire only once: "They set on fire and burn the weapons." But Isaiah, chapter lxvi. 24, is not speaking about weapons, but men: "They shall look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched." The prophet cannot allude to any earthly judgment, in these latter words; for no worm can live in a material fire.

To prove that the phrase, the fire that never shall be quenched, does not mean that the fire shall be strictly burning forever, Mr. W. refers to the following passages, where similar phrases occur which must be understood with some limitation; Leviticus vi. 13; Jeremiah xvii. 27; Ezekiel xx. 45—48; Isaiah xxxiv. 9, 10. Mr. W. was aware, however, that it would be objected, "These fires were all on earth, and in time, and therefore must have an end, or cease to burn; but the fire of hell is in eternity, and therefore must last as long as eternity shall endure." To this he replies, "Had those unquenchable fires never gone out while earth

endured, or while time lasted, there might have been some force in this argument; but since the continuance of the fire does not depend upon the season in which it is kindled, but upon the combustibles that feed and support it, this can be no objection.”*

But I think it is an objection unanswerable. It will be granted, I believe, that the fires, in the instances above alluded to, were not quenched, but went out when the combustible matter which fed them was spent; they therefore serve to prove, that the fire of hell will not be quenched, nor even go out, except the matter which feeds it should all be consumed. But that cannot be. The wrath of God which supports this dreadful fire will never be exhausted. Rev. xv. 7: “And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever.” Lampe observes upon this text, “Why, with the mentioning of divine wrath, should the description of the supreme Being, as the God who liveth forever and ever, be immediately subjoined? Where would be the strength of this repetition, unless to specify an illustrious example, in order to exhibit, in the most expressive light, the tremendous wrath of God? And if it respects him, is it not manifest, that God will continue to prove his existence as living forever and ever, even by the displaying of his wrath? But how could that be demonstrated by the pouring out of the vials of his wrath, unless that very threatening of wrath should be protracted forever and ever?”† The persons upon whom the fire acts will never be consumed. This Mr. W. grants, page 55: “As to the expression,” says he, of “being salted with fire, I think our Saviour intended to teach us that they should not be annihilated by the fire, but preserved therein.” It remains, that the fire of hell will burn forever.

It is true, Mr. W. observes further, “I would also propose, whether our Lord did not mean to intimate,

* Dialogues, p. 51—55.

† Dissertation on Endless Punishment, pp. 10, 11.

that even the fire itself shall be of use, under his direction, to humble, subdue, and penetrate the stubborn and disobedient rebels that shall be cast into it. Fire, as well as salt, is a great purifier; and preserves and cleanses those things which are able to endure it; and is the great agent by which all metals are separated from their dross, and prepared for the use for which they were designed." (Page 55.) According to this account, when the fire has penetrated, humbled, and subdued sinners, it will die out; and they, like metals purified from dross, will be taken out of the furnace. But hell-fire is uniformly represented as a punishment, without the least intimation of its being a purgatory. Hell is twice called a furnace of fire; (Matt. xiii. 42, 50;) and the reason why it is so called, is also mentioned. If, therefore, it were a purifying furnace, this was the proper time to explain it. But does our Lord say, "There shall sinners be purified?" No such thing: his words convey the idea of punishment: "There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." The scriptures represent some sinners as incapable of being purified. It is impossible to renew them to repentance; they are rejected; they are good for nothing; they are cast away. (Heb. vi. 4—8; Matt. v. 13; xiii. 48.)

Mr. W. seems to have carefully avoided saying any thing about the worm; and no doubt for a wise reason; it would have rendered useless all his labour about the fire. For if the fire being termed unquenchable, do not hinder but that punishment may naturally come to an end, yet this conclusion is inadmissible when we consider, that their worm dieth not. Take either of the phrases separately, and there is some room for cavil. The fire never shall be quenched: no, says the objector, no being shall put it out, but it may die out of itself. Their worm dieth not: no, says the objector again, the worm will not naturally die of itself, but it may be killed. But unite the two ideas, and the controversy is ended: for that punishment which no being shall put an end to, and which will not naturally of itself come to an end, must necessarily be eternal.

A REPLY TO MR. R. WRIGHT'S ESSAY
ON FUTURE PUNISHMENT, ETC.

LETTER I.

TO THE REV. MR. BENSON.

DEAR SIR,

I WROTE my book against the Universalists, in consequence of Mr. Vidler giving a public challenge to all the Methodist preachers. I hesitated for a long time about engaging in the controversy, in the hope that some preacher, more competent to the task, would have taken it up. I have the satisfaction, however, of learning, from various quarters, that my labours have been eminently successful in putting a stop to the spread of Universalism. This I consider as a sufficient reward.

Mr. Wright, one of the gentlemen upon whose works I animadverted, has lately published a short "Essay on Future Punishment," in the preface to which, he assigns some reasons for declining the controversy. Mr. W. and Mr. V. are very intimate friends, and have, therefore, undoubtedly had some communication with each other upon the subject. It does not appear likely, considering these circumstances, that Mr. W. would have told the world my book was unworthy of an answer, if Mr. V. intended to give it one. The plain matter of fact seems to be this: Mr. V.'s challenge is accepted, and something must be done. He could not write again upon the subject without giving his opponent a reply. His right-hand man was not bound by a pledge; he therefore comes forward and tells the world, that I do not deserve public notice. You know, sir, it is the easiest

thing in the world, when a man cannot answer an argument, to say, it is good for nothing.

But though Mr. W. has not written a formal answer to my book, he tells his readers, (pref. pp. 4, 5,) "It is presumed that the following essay, though not written as a reply to Mr. I., contains more than an answer to what it would be proper to notice in writing a reply to his book." Most of Mr. W.'s friends would have been amply satisfied if he had given anything like a tolerable answer. I believe the most sanguine among them did not look for more than that. Now in this more than an answer to my book, Mr. W. employs three whole pages and a half, (24, 25, 26, and part of 27,) in arguing against endless punishment, and nearly three whole pages (part of 34, the whole of 35 and 36, and part of 37) in giving "a summary view of the leading arguments in support of the doctrine of limited and corrective punishment." The rest of the essay is taken up in proving that sin will be punished,—that it will be punished in a future state,—and that the sinner will not, after a period of suffering, be annihilated. I have no controversy with Mr. W. upon these subjects. It is true that under the first chapter he assumes that sinners will be restored; and he infers from it they must be punished, because he thinks punishment necessary to work their reformation; but you know, sir, that assumptions pass for nothing in controversy. Six pages and a half then are what I am to consider, as containing more than an answer to my book. Do you not think, sir, that Mr. W. bids fair to become the Don Quixote of controversialists?

Mr. W.'s reasons for not writing a reply to my book, are,—

1. "Mr. I. has stated nothing new, produced nothing in support of his hypothesis, nor used any reasoning against limited punishment, but what has before received examination and replication." (Pref. pp. 3, 4.) After reading these assertions, we must not be very extravagant in our expectations from Mr. W., on the score of veracity.

2. "Had Mr. I. written in a different tone, and shown more of a disposition for the patient investigation of religious truth, it might have been proper to have replied to his book, though it contained nothing new." (Pref. p. 4.) When the tone which a writer assumes clearly indicates an indisposition of mind to yield to the force of truth, it is not worth while, on his own account, to enter into controversy with him, because there can be very little hope of his conversion; and therefore if the dispute be private, it may be prudent to decline it. But when the question is before the public, the case is altered. A man who writes in a bad spirit, may use strong arguments, and his arguments may operate upon the minds of his readers; and when that is the case, if he propagate error, an answer is necessary.

The spirit in which an author writes has nothing to do with the main point. When I take up a piece of controversy to read, I do not inquire, is the man in a good temper, or in a bad one? Is he proud, or is he humble? I ask, what is truth? If he begin to boast or scold, instead of engaging in close argument, I cry, stop sir!—I did not want to know whether you were haughty or angry, but whether you could confute your opponent. If he begin to beg, rather than to fight, I say,—sir, you are very humble, but you are also very weak; you ought to know, that truth does not command the homage and obedience of the world, in answer to her prayers, but by the power of her arguments. But when a man wards off a feeble thrust from a swaggering antagonist, and immediately brings him down, I allow him to laugh; and I laugh with him; who could forbear? This case applies to the dispute betwixt me and the Universalists. Mr. Vidler, as the champion of his party, publicly challenged the Methodists; and because they did not come forward immediately, he boasted and blustered away against them wonderfully. I took the field, and encountered several of them together. I warded off their blows, and brought them to the ground. I could not help smiling;

and hundreds have smiled with me. They have quitted the field, and Mr. Wright is running about with his sword in his hand, telling his friends and the world that I have not hurt him; that he could easily vanquish me; and yet, that he will have nothing more to do with me, because there is something in my looks which he does not like, etc. Had I engaged in this controversy for the sake of victory, could I have desired one more complete?

Mr. W. complains that I want "a disposition for the patient investigation of religious truth." If Mr. W. has got the assurance to say, that he has had the patience to investigate half as many arguments, pro and con, in one publication, as I have done in mine, he is qualified to say anything.

"His manner," says Mr. W., page 4, "is ill suited to the solemnity of the subject." If my mind had not been deeply impressed with the importance and solemnity of the subject, I should not have taken the trouble to employ my pen upon it; but a man may be allowed sometimes to be merry, even upon a grave subject. Suppose our country were invaded by a large army. The subject is a very serious one. But if the enemy appeared on our shores with wooden swords, and with muskets and cannon without any ammunition, might not every British soldier, without exciting any suspicion of his loyalty or patriotism, laugh at their impudence and weakness? A very solemn question was once agitated in Israel; whether Jehovah or Baal ought to be worshipped. A prophet, who had hazarded his life in the service of Jehovah, could not forbear making use of a little irony, when he saw the silly attempts made by the priests of Baal to persuade their idol to work a miracle, in support of his claims to the adoration of the multitude. Like the soldier and the prophet, I feel the solemnity of the subject; but like them, I am compelled to smile at the folly of the adversary.

The Universalists have treated their opponents in the most indecorous manner. We have been called snarling cynics, and flippant fops; we have been pub-

lily challenged, and for our silence have been publicly insulted; we have been represented as rejoicing that the punishment of the wicked will be endless; and "the leading men both among Calvinists and Arminians," have been represented as "doing everything which interest, connexion, favour, or frowns can do, to stop the progress of the universal doctrine:" and all this is said, without any proof of the things charged upon us being so much as attempted.* Could they expect, sir, after all this abuse and slander, that, if we should come forward at all, it would be with all the apathy of stoics? I have sometimes smiled at their folly, and at others I have chastised them for their unfair dealing; but I am not sensible that I have once indulged in either unchristian levity, or indignation.

You will find, sir, I believe, other reasons in the course of these letters, than those which Mr. W. has assigned, for his declining the controversy. I do not desire better evidence of the impression which my book has made upon his mind, than he has furnished in this essay. He has abandoned the old ground, taken up a new position, proposes a new plan of operations, and attributes all these changes to the power of his opponents. The remaining part of this letter shall be taken up in tracing the differences between the present and former statements of the question, and in showing to what miserable expedients the party have recourse, to support their declining cause. The inquiry will afford you a good deal of amusement.

Mr. W. says, pages 32, 33, "It is not now contended that the final restitution of all mankind is so clearly revealed in the scriptures as to be capable of being supported otherwise than by inference and deduction; nor that it ought to be maintained as a leading or fundamental doctrine of christianity."

Mr. Winchester was of a different opinion upon both these points. He considered the doctrine as not merely implied, but expressly asserted in many passages of scripture, and as being of the utmost importance.

* See the Preface to my Refutation of the Doctrine of Universal Restoration.

In his reply to Mr. Taylor, he says, pages 53, 54, "Let every one consider that this is not a notion or speculation. It is not a hint dropped by the by. It is not a thought collected from a single passage, or a few passages of scripture merely by implication. But it is a glorious and infinitely important truth: a plain scripture doctrine, positively and repeatedly asserted in various forms of speech, on the most solemn occasions, when every circumstance required the most clear and expressive language. Let no christian therefore dare to reject it, lest he be found guilty of making God a liar, in not believing the record he hath given to his Son." Again, pages 45, 46: "Those who defend the doctrine of the restoration from scripture, if I may be allowed to speak for myself and brethren, are so far from doing it by laboured criticism and deductions, that they suppose they have many plain scriptures, which expressly relate to the subject, to build upon." And again, page 43, "I think that the promises of the reconciliation and restitution of all things, contained in many texts, are some of the most plain, positive, and absolute promises, or prophecies, in all the Bible." And to crown all, he has told us, page 41, that "no controversy of equal importance with this was ever presented to mankind."

There is a very great difference in these two statements betwixt Mr. Winchester and Mr. Wright. To what is this owing? Mr. Wright shall answer: "The objections of our opponents," says he, "may lead us to state the subject in a more correct and consistent manner: this is an advantage I hope we shall derive from opposition." Thus you see, sir, how we have made them lower their pretensions. Formerly, no doctrine was more clearly revealed, nor equally important; now, it is not "capable of being supported otherwise than by inference and deduction, nor ought it to be maintained as a fundamental doctrine." We must grant that this latter comes much nearer to a "correct and consistent" statement of the subject than the former; and as Mr. W. is kind enough to attribute this "advantage," to the objections of his opponents, we

may be allowed to congratulate ourselves upon the success of our labours. This is a very important concession. Everything which God requires us to believe, he has expressly revealed ; and, therefore, since the restoration is destitute of this character of authority, no man is bound to believe it ; and it is difficult to say, how the Universalists can justify their conduct in making such a clamour about it, when they confess, that no inspired writer has spoken expressly upon it. I hope we shall hear no more about the doctrine of the restoration being intended by God Almighty as a centre of union among christians, and as necessary to be believed in order to perceive the harmonious display of his perfections ; for we may be sure that the word of God must be express upon these important subjects.

It will strike you, sir, as a very singular circumstance, that Mr. W. would have people to believe his doctrine without putting him to the trouble of proving it. You will be surprised how a man who is perpetually canting about rationality, can have the assurance to propose such a thing. Yet so it is. "As all our knowledge," says he, page 23, "respecting a future state must be derived from divine revelation, whatever men assert respecting future punishment, they are bound to prove from the Scriptures ; the work of proving that it will be endless belongs to those who assert that tremendous doctrine, not to their opponents to prove a negative ; if they fail in the production of sufficient proof, a contrary doctrine must follow of course." Mr. W. is so pleased with this new discovery, and it is of so much importance to him in his present forlorn condition, that he introduces it a third time at page 33. "As the *onus probandi* lies with the advocates for endless misery, if they fail to produce clear and decisive proof, the advocate for limited and corrective punishment has, in fact, nothing to prove ; the doctrine for which he contends follows as a necessary consequence."

There seems to be a strange contradiction in the

above statement. Mr. W. tells us, that "whatever men assert respecting future punishment, they are bound to prove from the scriptures." You would naturally suppose from this, that when Mr. W. asserts that future punishment will be limited and corrective, he is obliged to prove his doctrine from the sacred oracles. No such thing. If I "fail to produce clear and decisive proof of endless misery," he "has, in fact, nothing to prove," his "doctrine must follow of course," and "as a necessary consequence," whether the scriptures say anything or nothing about it.

Mr. Wright says, it does not belong to him to prove a negative. Granted; but surely Mr. W. does not need to be informed, that it is not a negative, but a positive proposition, to affirm, that future punishment will be limited and corrective. When I assert that future punishment will be endless, he has certainly a right to put his negative upon it, and to demand my proof; but when, on the other hand, he affirms that future punishment will be limited and corrective, it is my turn to deny and his to prove. Any dabbler in logic knows that this is the established order of disputation; and I believe, Mr. W. is the first, in this enlightened age, who has endeavoured to set it aside. His cause must be in a most desperate state, when he is reduced to the expedient of desiring the world to receive his doctrine, without any proof at all, though he confesses, in the same breath, that "whatever men assert respecting future punishment, they are bound to prove from the scriptures."

You know, my dear sir, that a man may believe a truth, and yet "fail in the production of sufficient proof" of it. There are thousands who believe in the existence of God, and in the authenticity and divine inspiration of the scriptures, who do not know how to prove either. Mr. W. will not deny this. But their failing to produce sufficient proof does not establish the truth of either atheism or deism; it only shows the ignorance of such believers.

We urge the words everlasting, forever, etc., in proof of endless punishment. Mr. W. tells us, page 25, that these words "properly mean a hidden period ; and that it best agrees with the awful obscurity in which the future state of the wicked is left, to suppose their punishment will be perpetual during a hidden or undefined period." I will grant this, for the sake of argument, though I positively deny it in fact. Now then, on Mr. W.'s principles, the reason why we fail in the proof of endless misery is, because its duration is not revealed in the scriptures, but is involved in obscurity, is hidden and undefined ; but this very reason applies with exactly the same force against his inference, that its duration is limited. When there is no decisive proof on either side of a question, to say that the want of proof on one side, proves the truth of the other, is one of the greatest absurdities which can be uttered. Tom and Harry entered into a dispute about the age of their deceased mother. Tom insisted that she was fifty, and Harry, that she was only forty. After the most diligent search, they could find no documents to enable them to ascertain precisely how old she was. Well then, says Harry to Tom, if you cannot prove that she was fifty, my assertion that she was just forty "must follow of course !" But I wish the Universalists particularly to remark, that if, as Mr. W. says, "all our knowledge respecting a future state must be derived from divine revelation," and if this revelation has told us nothing about the duration of punishment, but has left it hidden and undefined, then it not only follows, that they cannot infer that future punishment will be limited from a want of proof that it will be endless, but also, that it is absolutely impossible for them to prove its limitation, in any way whatever.

Might we not, sir, insist upon it, that if only one side had to perform the task of proving, it belonged to our opponents rather than to us. The doctrine of endless punishment has obtained general belief in the christian world from the days of Christ and the apostles to the present time. Origen, it is true, entertained

some opinions on this subject which differed from those of the generality ; but he made very few converts ; and the modern Universalists do not pretend to adopt the sentiment upon his principles. Our opponents then are to be looked upon as a sort of reformers. Now every man expects a reformer to say to him, "I will prove that you are wrong, and that I am right." In what a pitiful light would the characters of Luther and the other reformers have appeared to posterity, had they said to the papists, "Gentlemen, we do not believe your doctrines ; and if you cannot prove them to be true, to our satisfaction, you ought to adopt, without examination, as a matter of course, and as a necessary consequence, a new system, which we have had the goodness to frame ready to your hands." Instead of this, they zealously set about exposing the errors of popery, and proving and defending the doctrines of the reformation. If Mr. W. be either afraid or ashamed to try to prove his doctrines, he may be silent and welcome ; but he ought to excuse us, if we do not implicitly receive his dogmas.

Mr. Winchester believed that the *onus probandi* lay on his side the question. In his reply to Mr. Taylor, pages 41, 42, he remarks: "The threatenings of everlasting fire, everlasting destruction, eternal damnation, eternal fire, and everlasting punishment, would have settled the point" (the belief of endless punishment) "with me, did I not find express promises in the same book" about the restoration. After citing some texts of scripture, he proceeds: "Now were it not for these and many other express promises in the New Testament, I should never have renounced the tenet of endless damnation." Mr. Winchester, you see, acknowledged that the proof lay wholly with him, and that if it were not for express promises in favour of the restoration, which we have seen Mr. Wright does not pretend to, he confesses that the point would be settled on the side of endless punishment. And even Mr. W. does not deny, that "the doctrine of endless punishment seems to be stated in some passages in

the New Testament." Now when a doctrine seems to be stated in the scriptures, it ought not to be given up for another of a quite opposite nature, without the clearest proof. To take off the force of the objection, that endless punishment seems to be taught in the New Testament, he says, "so does the doctrine of transubstantiation." If Mr. Wright thinks that the doctrine of transubstantiation even seems to be taught in the New Testament, I have only to say, I cannot congratulate him on his discernment.

Here, sir, is another instance of Mr. Wright's stating the subject in a very different manner from what the great apostle of his cause has done. Mr. Winchester was ready to prove everything; Mr. Wright is unwilling to prove anything. We admire his greater modesty. This is another advantage which he, no doubt, has derived from the objections of his opponents.

We have seen that Mr. W. requires us to "produce clear and decisive proof:" he assigns a reason for this, page 33: "The most indubitable proof is necessary to induce a belief of endless punishment, because it is a doctrine seemingly repugnant to reason and the known perfections of God." And yet he has not denied, in the same page, that "the doctrine of endless punishment seems to be stated in some passages in the New Testament." Now this, sir, seems very strange; that God should seem to reveal a doctrine to his creatures, which seems repugnant both to their reason, and to his perfections. I cannot see that God has stamped the semblance of error on the face of truth; if Mr. W. can, I do not envy him the discovery, nor all the advantages which he can derive from it.

In page 34, Mr. W. assigns his reason why "inferences and deductions are deemed a sufficient ground for the admission of the final restoration." This wonderful reason is, because these inferences and deductions "flow from what is admitted on all sides, respecting the divine character and perfections." Endless punishment flows as naturally from these admissions as the restoration. I have shown at large in my book, that

the restoration cannot be proved from the character of God, and that endless punishment is perfectly consistent with it. This Mr. W. has not dared to answer.

Thus you see, sir, the absurdities into which Mr. W. has betrayed himself, in attempting to show "why inferences and deductions may not be admitted as a sufficient ground for the belief of endless punishment, but the most direct proof is required, while inferences and deductions are deemed a sufficient ground for the admission of the final restoration." His doctrine seems very agreeable to the character of God, and my doctrine seems contrary to it! but to whom? Why to Mr. W. and his friends, to be sure, for nobody else can see the matter in this light. Now, sir, suppose I were to say that the direct contrary seems to me to be the truth, do you think that Mr. W. would allow me to set inferences and deductions on my side of the question, as equal to the most direct proof on his?

It was on account of her penury that the widow's mite was said to be more than the liberal offerings of the rich; she gave all that she had. Mr. W. has done the same: he confesses that he has nothing better to offer than inferences and deductions. But he carries his money to a different market. She did not offer her mite as the purchase of truth. This precious commodity is sold to the highest bidder, and poverty can make no purchases. Mr. W. has got some shining money; he says it seems very good, and, mine seems very indifferent; that is, his new coin glitters, and my old coin looks dull; and therefore a little of his, he thinks, is equal to a deal of mine. We have an old proverb, that all is not gold that glitters. Justice takes her scales and weights, finds that the polish of a guinea adds nothing to its weight, and disposes of the pearl of great price to him whose money is heaviest.

Mr. W. would not, surely, wish people to believe his doctrine on less evidence than is necessary to induce a belief of the doctrine of his opponents, if he could give them more than his opponents can produce, or even as much. We do not need Argus's eyes to see

through all this. Mr. W. is the first writer I have met with who has proposed to make inferences and deductions on one side of a question equal to "the most direct proof" on the other; and there can be but one reason assigned for this singular proposal—the weakness of his cause. He may, if he pleases, rank this new discovery among the advantages which he has derived from the objections of his opponents.

Mr. W. is evidently at his wit's end. He knows not upon what ground to rest his cause. At one time he seems disposed to rely on the perfections of God, and to give up revelation. "If Mr. I. supposes that proving that some passages of scripture have been misapplied by Universalists, is proving the doctrine of endless punishment, he is greatly mistaken; the opposers of that doctrine found their objections, not so much on the interpretation of particular passages of scripture, as on what is admitted by all parties, respecting the character, perfections, and designs of God." (Page 4.) I can assure Mr. W. that I no more supposed their perversions of scripture proved endless punishment, than I supposed they proved saint-worship; but I confess I did suppose I had proved that their doctrine has no support from the scriptures, when I had shown the misapplication of all those passages to which they appealed. Mr. W. does not deny that I have proved "that some passages of scripture have been misapplied by Universalists." And when it is considered that in his former publications he appeals with much confidence to the scriptures, and that he now, when his eye is upon the proofs which my book affords of himself and his party perverting them, turns from the word of God, to the character, perfections, and designs of God, the reason why he lays so little stress upon the sacred oracles is sufficiently obvious. But by and by, when he has lost sight of my book, he veers round again, and ventures all upon revelation exclusively. "As all our knowledge," says he, page 23, "respecting a future state must be derived from divine revelation, whatever men assert respecting future punishment,

they are bound to prove from the scriptures." When a man asserts such contradictions as these, it is impossible we should know what he means ; perhaps he does not himself.

Thus we see, Mr. W. has given up all pretension to express revelation : he wishes us to believe his doctrine without any proof : if proof be required, he wishes us to take a very little on his side as equal to a great deal on ours ; and he lays the stress of the argument upon the character, perfections, and designs of God, though by his own confession he is bound to the scriptures. Now, sir, set all this pitiful shuffling against his professed reasons for not giving me a reply, and you will not find it difficult to come at the true reason of his silence.

If Mr. W. should venture to take up his pen again in this controversy, I hope he will derive some advantage from this letter, and be able to "state the subject in a more correct and consistent manner," than he has done in the essay under review ; for he has certainly left himself ample room for improvement. At any rate, I trust my remarks will be of some "advantage," in opening the eyes of the public, and afford you some little amusement, which will be a gratification to,—

Dear sir, yours, etc.,

D. I.

LETTER II.

TO THE REV. MR. BENSON.

DEAR SIR,

I INTEND, in this letter, to consider what Mr. Wright has said against the doctrine of endless punishment. He says, page 23, "What has been urged in support of the doctrine of endless misery may be brought into a narrow compass ; it is summarily comprehended in the following particulars." The number of particulars

is five ; they are brought into the "narrow compass" of half a page ; and even upon this poor half page, we are not allowed to speak for ourselves, but are made to say just what Mr. W. pleases. It is quite natural to suppose, from such conduct as this, that our arguments, like coals of fire, had burnt Mr. W.'s fingers. He is afraid to handle them ; he pours water upon them ; but still they are too hot for him ; so, after holding them about half a minute, he throws them down, and determines to have nothing more to do with them. Whatever opinion you may entertain of Mr. W.'s honesty, you will undoubtedly admire his prudence.

Mr. W., you will recollect, has charged me with a want of "disposition for the patient investigation of religious truth." Compare my book with his half-page statement of our arguments, and with his charge, and you will feel, as I do, a mingled sensation of pity and contempt.

I have read many controversial works where the authors have fabricated arguments for their opponents, and then very gravely refuted them. If I were wicked enough to do it, I could very readily prove any system you please to be erroneous, provided I might be allowed, as a preliminary, to manufacture the arguments upon which it shall be founded. But I never could be satisfied with this method of managing a controversy. I have said, why not suffer your opponents to speak out for themselves ? Why not give us chapter and verse ? I have often examined the books confuted in this summary way, and then the mystery has been explained ! I determined, when I entered upon this controversy, to present the arguments of the Universalists at length, and in their own words, that the world might have a full view of the subject, and be able to determine whether I succeeded in refuting them or not ; and I am bold to affirm, without any fear of contradiction, that the present age has not produced a controversial work of the same size with mine, which contains a larger portion of quotations from the works of opponents.

Had I not a right to expect, that when I wrote in answer to a public challenge, if the party replied at all, they would do me the justice to represent my arguments fairly? But Mr. W. comes forward and pretends to compress all the proofs of endless punishment within the narrow compass of half a duodecimo page, and to give, not merely an answer, but "more than an answer" to my book, without quoting a single line from it!

"To invalidate the arguments used in support of the doctrine of endless torments," Mr. W. gravely informs his readers, pages 23, 24, "it will be said that they are founded on detached and figurative passages of scripture, which will admit of a different meaning." I know Mr. W. has said so several times, both in this and his former publications. He has, perhaps, forgotten an old English proverb, "It is sooner said than proved."

You will expect, sir, as a matter of course, that Mr. W. has said something about the words everlasting, forever and ever, etc. He tells us, page 24, "Those terms are, in the Old Testament, applied to things which have had an end, and, in the New Testament, to things which will have an end." You know I granted that those words are sometimes applied to things whose duration is limited; but I proved that they properly denote endless duration, and that they cannot be understood with any restriction when applied to future punishment. Mr. W. has not entered into any discussion about the proper meaning of the words, abstracted from their application to any particular subject; and therefore what I have said to prove that *aion* properly means eternity, and *aionios* eternal, may now be considered as indisputable. He however informs us, page 25, "that the words everlasting, forever, etc., as connected with future punishment, properly mean, a hidden period;" but he cites no authority, and gives no reason to support this new meaning.

But though Mr. W. does not examine one of my arguments, in this "more than an answer" to my book,

he endeavours to show, "that some of the strongest passages urged in support of the doctrine of endless punishment, do not unequivocally relate to the punishment of men after they are raised from the dead." If Mr. W. has succeeded in this attempt, it must be confessed that he has very considerably weakened the evidence in support of endless punishment. I will therefore lay the whole of what he has said upon this subject before you, and leave you to judge, after comparing it with my reply, what danger that doctrine is in from this new mode of attack.

"That Matthew xxv. 31—46, relates to the judgment Christ will declare and execute upon the nations found on the earth at his coming, and does not relate to men after they are raised from the dead; that in the whole account no mention is made of the resurrection, and that when raised from the dead, men will not exist in a national form, so as to need being separated, the good from the bad, but be found in two vast bodies, the righteous and the wicked." (Page 24.)

Mr. W. assigns two reasons why this text "does not relate to men after they are raised from the dead." 1. "In the whole account no mention is made of the resurrection." No mention is made of the resurrection in Romans xiv. 10—12; 2 Corinthians v. 10; Hebrews ix. 27. Mr. W. has professed in this essay his belief of a general judgment to take place after the general resurrection. Now I am sure he will not deny that the texts just quoted refer to the general judgment; because it is impossible to prove the doctrine from the scriptures, if the authority of such passages be disputed. But if these texts prove the general judgment, though they are silent about the resurrection, then this silence in Matthew xxiv. 31—46, can be no reason why it does not refer to that awful day of Christ. The resurrection and the judgment are two distinct subjects; and therefore there is no necessity always to speak of them together. In fact there would be just as much propriety in saying, that no text can prove baptism which does not treat of the Lord's

supper, as to say that no text can prove the general judgment which does not mention the resurrection. This reason of Mr. W. is so remarkably weak, that I really am ashamed to dwell upon it.

2. "When raised from the dead, men will not exist in a national form, so as to need being separated, the good from the bad, but be found in two vast bodies, the righteous and the wicked." Their being called, all nations, does not imply that they will exist in a national form when this judgment takes place, and the connexion is inconsistent with such a notion. "Before him shall be gathered all nations." They cannot exist in a national form when gathered before the throne of Christ.

Mr. W. supposes that, when raised from the dead, men will not need to be separated, the good from the bad. But how will he prove this? He does not need to be informed, I hope, that the good and bad frequently mingle together in the same grave; and I presume he will not contend that they will be separated prior to the resurrection; I do not see, therefore, how he can avoid the conclusion, that the separation will be subsequent to the resurrection.

Mr. W. has said nothing to prove that the phrase, all nations, intends "the nations found on the earth at Christ's coming," exclusively. He might with as much propriety have restricted it to the first age of the world as to the last; for it is just as likely that our Lord meant Adam and Eve only, as that he intended no more than the people of any other particular age. There is no restriction in the passage to any one age, and it must therefore include all nations in all ages.

Mr. W. grants that the passage refers to a judicial transaction; it "relates to the judgment Christ will declare and execute." There is not another passage in all the Bible where the proceedings of the general judgment are so fully detailed as in this. It begins with these striking words: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

And before him shall be gathered all nations." The awful separation takes place; the righteous are rewarded, and the wicked punished. If this passage, as Mr. W. contends, only relates to the judgment Christ will declare and execute "upon the nations, found on the earth at his coming," there will be no such thing as a general judgment.

The Judge will say to the righteous, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom," etc. Mr. W. restricts this kingdom to the virtuous found upon the earth at Christ's coming; but the Saviour promised it to all his disciples. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." (Luke xii. 32; Matthew xiii. 43.) The apostle threatened the wicked that they should not inherit the kingdom of God; but I nowhere read of his threatening the righteous, had if they did not live till the coming of Christ, they should have neither part nor lot in this matter. So far from it, he declares, "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (or go before) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first;" (that is, before the living shall ascend. And when the dead are all risen out of their graves;) "then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." (1 Thess. iv. 15—17.) Can anything be more express than this passage is against Mr. W.'s scheme? He supposes that at the coming of Christ, the living will be judged before the dead will be raised, and that Matthew xxv. 31—46, "does not relate to men after they are risen from the dead." The apostle contradicts this in the most positive terms. He assures us that the living shall not go before the dead to meet the Lord, but that the dead shall rise first, and then, both shall be caught up together.

Mr. W. proceeds, pages 24, 25, "that in 2 Thessalonians, i. 9, no mention being made in the context of the wicked dead being raised at that time, the apostle is most likely speaking of the wicked who will be found alive on the earth at the coming of Christ." What I have said above is, properly speaking, "more than an answer," to this new interpretation.

Page 25. "The passage in the Apocalypse, which speaks of the beast and false prophet being tormented day and night forever and ever, furnishes no proof that the wicked dead when raised will be consigned to endless torments; for no one will contend that the beast and false prophet are persons raised from the dead; besides, the contents of the Apocalypse are too symbolical for its peculiar phraseology to admit of a rigid, literal construction."

You know, sir, it is very common with the sacred writers to represent large bodies of men, sometimes by an animal, sometimes by a man or woman, of a particular character; but the hieroglyphic is always characteristic of the persons it is intended to designate. Thus a beast speaking like a dragon, is a fit emblem of persecutors; a whore, of unfaithfulness to God; and a false prophet, of deceivers. The punishment, therefore, said to be inflicted upon the beast, the whore, and the false prophet, is descriptive of the fate of all bloody bigots, apostates, and hypocrites. Thus in Revelation xx. 10, the beast is said to be "tormented day and night forever and ever," but in Revelation xiv. 9—11, this is explained to denote the punishment of the men who worship the beast. "If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night." By parity of reason, when the whore and the

false prophet are said to be punished forever and ever, the plain meaning is, that this shall be the portion of all backsliders and deceivers.

Having shown that the beast and false prophet designate men, and that their punishment is descriptive of the fate of those men, it follows, of course, that they will be raised from the dead. Mr. W. says, "No one will contend that they are persons raised from the dead." It is true they are not yet raised from the dead, but I need not prove to him that they will be raised at a future period, because he believes in the doctrine of a general resurrection. What can Mr. W. mean by harping upon the resurrection perpetually? Does he suppose that all punishment must terminate prior to the resurrection, if the resurrection be not expressly mentioned in the threatening? Jesus Christ promised eternal life to his sheep. (John x. 28.) In this text no mention is made of the resurrection; must we, from this omission, infer that the righteous will not be raised? or that their eternal life will end before they received their resurrection bodies? In Mr. W.'s reply to Dr. Ryland, page 9, he quotes John xiv. 19, as affording incontrovertible proof of endless happiness; yet the text does not drop a single hint about the resurrection. Now if Mr. W. contends that endless happiness may be promised in texts which make no mention of the resurrection, why does he urge that omission in other texts as a reason why they cannot threaten endless punishment? The question is, Do the words used denote endless duration? Mr. W. might just as well have mixed with the discussion, a dissertation upon repentance, faith, or anything else, as his quibbles about the resurrection.

Mr. W. says that "the contents of the Apocalypse are too symbolical for its peculiar phraseology to admit of a rigid literal construction." The beast and the false prophet are symbolical, but the phrase forever and ever is not; and it is upon this phrase, as connected with the punishment of the wicked, that we lay the stress in this controversy.

I will now give you Mr. W.'s explanation of Mark ix. 46. He assures us that this passage "by no means proves that the wicked will be fuel to the fire, and a prey to the worms, as long as God exists; for as the language is evidently figurative, Christ, in using it, might not refer to a future state, but to the confusion and misery which would be produced among his disciples, and in their minds, like a fire among them, and a worm within them, if they did not practice self-denial." (Page 25.) I shall not attempt to confute this. I have introduced it merely to let you see to what shifts Mr. W. will have recourse to avoid the force of our arguments. He that can believe it, let him believe it.

Mr. W. is very anxious to get rid "of the case of Judas, and of those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit." He says, page 25, "that such very singular cases ought not to be brought into argument, in reference to the duration of the punishment of all the wicked, as they are manifestly "inapplicable." It is true that Judas's crime cannot be repeated, but many a man has harboured the same dispositions in his heart, and therefore, had he been in Judas's circumstances, would have committed the same sin. The case of Judas, is that of a man betraying a virtuous friend, who had laid him under great obligations, for a trifling sum of money. This is no singular case; it occurs every day. When outward circumstances are favourable, it requires only two dispositions, ingratitude and covetousness, to produce such a case as this. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was not the crime of an individual merely, but of multitudes. It is not necessary to inquire here, whether this blasphemy can be committed now or not. If the evidences of divine truth are not presented to the minds of men with the same force in every age, and therefore, do not meet with the same sort of resistance in all ages, yet it is possible for the human heart to be as depraved in one age as in another. These two cases then may not be quite so singular as Mr. W. supposes.

But if it be proved that Judas and the blaspheming Pharisees will suffer forever, does it follow that all the

wicked will meet with the same fate? Perhaps not: but still "such singular cases ought to be brought into argument" against the Universalists, because they destroy the vital principles of the restoration. Endless punishment can no longer be said to be disproportionate to the crimes of this short life, nor to be inconsistent with the character, perfections, and designs of God: judgment is not a mediatorial work, founded upon mercy; nor is hell a purgatory. Besides, the blasphemers are said to be in danger of eternal (*aioniou*) damnation. (Mark iii. 29.) Now, if the blasphemers will literally be punished forever, the word in this passage must denote endless duration; and if it be granted that it properly means eternal in one place, where it is applied to future punishment, how will the Universalists show that it has not the same meaning in all the other places where it is applied to the same subject? Eternal (*aionios*) punishment cannot mean both limited and endless punishment. The word must have the same unlimited meaning in Matthew xxv. 41, 46, and other places, that it has in Mark iii. 29. We need not wonder, sir, that Mr. W. would have these singular cases, as he calls them, left out of the controversy.

What Mr. W. says farther on the case of Judas, is borrowed from Mr. Vidler, and answered in my book. When old arguments are brought forward again, and no notice is taken of the answers, there is no mystery in the business, particularly when more than a reply is promised.

"The account of those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, affords not clear proof that the Jews who committed that sin will be tormented to all eternity; if punished both in this world and the next, it is all the words clearly express. It may be said in that case, according to the scripture sense of the word forgiveness, they have no forgiveness, as they suffer the whole punishment threatened, though it should terminate their existence, or mercy should afterwards be shown them." (Page 26.)

When Mr. W. says, "If punished both in this world

and the next, it is all the words clearly express," I suppose he alludes to Matthew xii. 32: "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Though it is not clearly expressed here that the blasphemer shall be punished, yet it is clearly implied. By his saying that punishment is "clearly expressed," he undoubtedly supposes, that a person who is not forgiven by the Almighty, is subject to punishment. In this I agree with him. But if punishment be necessarily associated with not having forgiveness, the blasphemer must suffer forever; for the words, "shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come," are equivalent to these: "shall not be liberated from punishment, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

But, sir, if punishment should terminate the existence of the wicked, as Mr. W. intimates, may possibly be the case, though it would be true enough that they would have no forgiveness, yet it is as certain that they cannot be restored. His idea of a future state is as much opposed as mine is to annihilation.

What can Mr. W. mean where he says of sinners, that "they suffer the whole punishment threatened, though mercy should afterwards be shown them?" It would sound very strange to tell a man, after he had suffered the full penalty of the law for his crimes, that it was an act of mercy to restore him again to society. He would answer, with indignation, "No; I claim my liberty as an act of justice; you cannot, without injustice, punish me any longer: I owe nothing to your mercy."

Mr. W. grants that the blasphemers will not be forgiven, and yet he contends that mercy will be shown them. If this be not a contradiction, I confess I do not know what is. Exercising mercy to the offender is the greatest proof that can possibly be given of forgiveness on the part of the offended. And it is not a possible case to say, that God will show mercy to those whom he will not forgive. This is self-evident; it requires no proof.

The words of our Lord are easy to be understood. When a man says of a person who has seriously injured him, that he will never forgive him, every body knows his meaning is, at the best, that he will never be reconciled to the offender, nor receive him to favour. Now it is said of the blasphemer twice, that he shall not be forgiven. It is said further, that he shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come; and that he hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. (Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 29; Luke xii. 10.) It is impossible to express, in stronger terms than these, eternal exclusion from the mercy and favour of God. The case of these blasphemers then is decisive against the restoration, and clearly establishes endless punishment; for if God will never be reconciled to them, nor receive them to favour, they cannot possibly be happy; and since there is no medium betwixt happiness and misery, Mr. W. being equally with myself opposed to annihilation, they must be forever wretched.

But I might have spared both you, sir, and myself all this trouble. Mr. W.'s own statement of the case serves sufficiently to confute his hypothesis. He contends that there will be unpardoned sinners in heaven! that God will receive those to favour whom he will never forgive! What sort of a song will these blasphemers sing? Not the song of David, where he breaks out, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me bless his holy name! who forgiveth all thine iniquities;" for Mr. W. assures us that "they have no forgiveness." Not the exalted strains of the blessed, as recorded, Revelation v. 9. "They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;" for they will not be redeemed out of any kindred, tongue, people, or nation upon earth; but, if we believe Mr. W., out of hell. Not the song of John and his companions in Revelation i. v. They sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood;"

but these blasphemers, according to Mr. W., will not be washed from sin in the blood of Christ, but will be purified from it by fire and brimstone. Not the song of "salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," sung by the "great multitude whom no man could number;" (Rev. vii. 9, 19;) for Mr. W., in his reply to Dr. Ryland, distinguishes between restoration and salvation, and informs us that the restored are not included in the number of the saved. What subject, then, can inspire their tongues with praise? Not pardon; for "they have no forgiveness." Not mercy; for "they suffer the whole punishment threatened." Not the cleansing efficacy of a Saviour's blood; for their punishment corrects their moral pravity. And if we exclude from their song the pardon of sin, the mercy of God, and the blood of Christ, I am afraid their note will be turned to lamentation, and mourning, and woe!

There is another subject which Mr. Wright dispatches in a very summary way that deserves particular attention. He says, pages 26, 27, "In reply to the assertion, that the moral state of sinners will be unchangeable after the present life, it will be said, that no such thing is expressed in the scriptures." He then proceeds to affirm, that "it is a mere unfounded assertion, and can be of no weight in argument." Is Mr. W. ignorant, that Mr. Fuller brings forward a great number of texts of scripture to prove that no change for the better will take place in the moral state of sinners after the present life? Is he ignorant also that I have done the same? But he might, perhaps, think it a safer way to tell the world there is no evidence, than to examine what is produced. Out of a multitude of passages which might be selected, I will, for the present, venture the cause upon three. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." "It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance." "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and

to be trodden under foot of men." (Rev. xxii. 11 ; Heb. vi. 4—6 ; Matt. v. 13.) When Mr. W. has proved, contrary to the words of our Lord, that the unjust shall not remain unjust still, nor the filthy remain filthy still ; when he hath shown how it is possible to work a moral change in those, whose repentance an apostle declares to be impossible ; and when he has answered our Lord's question, how salt which hath lost its virtue can recover its seasoning power, though the Saviour expressly declares "it is good for nothing." When, I say, Mr. W. has performed these wonders, we will then allow him to say, "that no such thing is expressed in the scriptures" as the impossibility of a change in "the moral state of sinners after the present life." Till then, I hope, the above may be considered as something more than "unfounded assertion," and be allowed to have some "weight in argument."

You will, perhaps, be surprised sir, if anything which Mr. W. says can surprise you, that this gentleman, after having exhausted his own artillery, should have recourse to the destructionists',—yet so it is. "The advocates," says he, page 27, "for the future total destruction of the wicked will say, that to describe the punishment which in scripture is called destruction, death, the second death, etc., as an endless life in torments, is manifestly absurd." I know they will affirm that it is absurd : but why ? Because, they say, these phrases prove annihilation. Does Mr. W. believe them ? If not, why does he wish us to believe them ? If he does, what becomes of the restoration ?

"It will be farther argued, that, as particular passages of scripture, especially such as are capable of being variously explained, ought to be construed in such a sense as best agrees with the revealed character and perfections of God, and the plain declarations of his mercy, it is impossible the doctrine of eternal torments should be taught in the passages quoted to support it ; because it cannot be reconciled with the revealed character of God, nor with many plain and positive declarations of his word." (Page 27.)

I am quite at a loss to know what plain and positive declarations of the word of God Mr. W. has an eye to. You know, sir, he has granted that there is nothing express in the scriptures in favour of his system ; and it seems to be a necessary consequence, that they contain nothing plain and positive against mine. It is denied that the passages urged in support of endless punishment "are capable of being variously explained." Mr. W.'s new explications have been fully refuted ; and he has not informed us what part of the "revealed character of God" opposes the doctrine for which I contend ; no further answer, therefore, is necessary.

I have now, sir, gone through Mr. W.'s arguments against endless punishment. You will, I dare say, think I have been sufficiently tedious ; but you know I stand accused of a want of "a disposition for the patient investigation of religious truth." Accept this as my apology, and believe me to be,—

Dear sir, yours, etc.,

D. I.

LETTER III.

TO THE REV. MR. BENSON.

DEAR SIR,

THIS letter shall contain an examination of Mr. Wright's "Summary View of the leading Arguments in support of the Doctrine of limited and corrective Punishment."

"1. Endless punishment must either be unjust, or it must cease to be any punishment at all ; for as there is no proportion between the present short life and eternity, there can be no proportion between an eternity of misery, and the sins of this short life ; yet punishment, to be just, must be proportioned to the crimes

punished; but if the punishment be proportioned to the sins of the present life, which the sacred scriptures plainly teach will be the case, and the infliction of it be endlessly extended, it must be divided into such an infinity of parts, that the part inflicted in any given period will be as nothing; consequently it will cease to deserve the name of punishment." (Pages 24, 25.)

Mr. W. has undertaken to prove one of these two things: "Endless punishment must either be unjust, or it must cease to be any punishment at all." I will consider each separately. 1. Is endless punishment unjust? "Punishment, to be just, must be proportioned to the crimes punished." Granted. "There can be no proportion between an eternity of misery and the sins of this short life." Not between the time of sinning, and the time of suffering; but there may be the justest proportion between the degree of sin, and the degree of suffering. Mr. W. applies the rule of proportion to time, I apply it to degree: he has said nothing to establish his own sentiment, or to disprove mine. One man can dispatch his neighbour in a moment, another cannot do it in less than an hour. If the punishment be proportioned to the time of sinning, the latter will receive just 3,600 times as much as the former. The principle of Mr. W.'s argument is this: he that can do most mischief in the least time will, have the least to suffer; the most accomplished villain will be best off. We should think an earthly judge insane who should make either the duration or the degree of punishment to depend upon the time of sinning. He considers the number, the nature, and the magnitude of sins, and punishes accordingly: the time taken up in committing them is never once taken into the account. I think Mr. W. will not venture again to attack the justice of endless punishment upon this ground. I will now inquire whether,—

2. "Endless punishment must cease to be any punishment at all." You will naturally suppose, sir, that a proposition which involves in itself a contradiction, as this does, must have some difficulties in its demon-

stration. None at all; at least to Mr. W. "If the punishment be proportioned to the sins of the present life, which the sacred scriptures plainly teach will be the case, and the infliction of it be endlessly extended, it must be divided into such an infinity of parts, that the part inflicted in any given period will be nothing; consequently it will cease to deserve the name of punishment."

You will observe, sir, that this argument is built upon the former. The proportion for which Mr. W. contends is, betwixt the time of sinning and the time of suffering. Grant him this, (though I have shown it to be an error,) and it will follow, that a sinner deserves to be punished for only a limited period. But when he talks about this limited punishment being endlessly extended, he talks nonsense. A woman might as well pretend to spin a thread of infinite length from a pound of tow. He divides his finite punishment into an infinite number of parts, includes each within a given period, calls one part nothing, and then concludes the whole to be nothing. But this spoils all. It is like the woman who, when she finds she cannot make the thread long enough, tries to break it into an infinite number of pieces, and proposes to include each within a given distance; but when her thread is broken to pieces and reduced to nothing, can it be said to be infinitely extended? Thus Mr. W., by trying to extend limited punishment, confesses that it breaks into an infinite number of parts; and when he comes to look for these parts, he cannot find them—it turns out that they are reduced to nothing; but if limited punishment be reduced to nothing, by an attempt to extend it endlessly; is not this a demonstration that it (limited punishment) cannot be endlessly extended?

Mr. W. divides his finite into parts, till he has reduced them to nothing, and then calls them an infinite number of parts. But this is absurd. Anything which will divide into an infinite number of parts, must be infinitely divisible; and that which is infinitely divisible, cannot by division be reduced to nothing; for when

anything by division is reduced to nothing ; it cannot be divided again, there is an end of it ; but that which is infinitely divisible may be divided, again and again, without end ; there will always be something remaining : Nothing cannot be a part of anything. We might as well call nothing a whole, as a part ; it is neither ; for talk as long as you please, nothing is nothing ; and all that Mr. W. has said comes to nothing !

It is, I believe, an indisputable axiom, that the parts of anything are equal to the whole of that of which they are the parts. "It is certain," says Dr. Keill, "whatever number of parts it" (any given magnitude) "has, whether finite or infinite, they are equal to their whole ; for as ten tenth parts of an unit make an unit, a hundred hundredth parts of an unit taken together do likewise compose an unit ; and a thousand thousandth parts collected in one sum, cannot be greater than the whole ; so likewise the infinite infinitesimal parts of any magnitude are equal to that magnitude." If, therefore, Mr. W.'s parts of punishment are nothing, the whole, before its division into parts, is nothing.

Mr. W.'s argument will serve equally well to demonstrate, that endless happiness, as the reward of the virtue of the saints, is nothing. Thus : "If the" happiness "be proportioned to the" virtues "of the present life, which the sacred scriptures plainly teach will be the case, and the" bestowing "of it be endlessly extended, it must be divided into such an infinity of parts, that the part" bestowed "in any given period will be as nothing, consequently, it will cease to deserve the name of" happiness. *Q. E. D.*

I should not have taken so much pains with this silly argument, but it is new, and is undoubtedly thought to be a wonderful discovery, as it is put at the head of Mr. W.'s leading arguments. But, my dear sir, if he seriously thinks that he has demonstrated endless punishment to be no punishment at all, "why doth he yet find fault" with us, under the pretence that we represent God Almighty as punishing sin too severe-

ly ? Surely no punishment at all cannot be too much ! Does M. W. suppose that limited punishment is any real punishment ? If so, he is involved in the absurdity of making it more than endless punishment ; if not, then they are both alike, nothing ; and all his pains to establish the one and to disprove the other, is, to say the least of it, only making "much ado about nothing."

2. "The scriptures plainly teach that there will be degrees of punishment in a future state ; that every one will receive according to his deeds ; that some will be beaten with many stripes, some with few stripes ; not the terms light and heavy, but many and few, are used, which, however figurative the language, convey the idea that the duration of suffering will not be the same to all who are punished ; but if all be punished with endless misery, all degrees in punishment will be destroyed." (Page 35.)

Here Mr. W. appeals to the scriptures, and cites two passages to prove that the difference in the punishment of sin will be in duration. "That every one will receive according to his deeds," we believe as firmly as Mr. W. can do. He thinks, however, that "if all be punished with endless misery, all degrees in punishment will be destroyed." This silly assertion has been often refuted, and yet it is brought forward again with as much confidence as if it were indisputable. Now, sir, what a curious proposition is this : there can be no difference in the degree of punishment which offenders suffer, if the duration of their punishment be equal. Suppose two men to be punished for one hour ; one is nailed to a cross, and the other is put into the stocks ; is there no difference in the degree of their punishment ? Can a maniac utter a greater absurdity than to say, that there is no difference in punishments except in their duration ? A cannon-ball can take off a leg in as little time as a fly can bite ; but there is a vast difference between the loss of a leg and the bite of a fly. And if there may be a difference in the degrees of punishment, the duration of which is equal, then sinners may receive a degree of punishment proportioned to their crimes, though the duration of punishment be endless. Mr. W.

will not deny that there will be a difference in the happiness of the righteous, proportioned to the difference in their virtue, and that the duration of the happiness of the virtuous will be endless ; and there is no more difficulty in reconciling different degrees of misery, than different degrees of happiness, with endless duration.

Mr. W.'s comment upon Luke xii. 47, 48, is the most singular I have ever met with. It is really a curiosity in sacred literature, and ought to be preserved, that generations to come may see how far blind zeal for a favourite system carried a man, in the nineteenth century. "Not the terms light and heavy," says Mr. W., "but many and few, are used, which, however figurative the language, convey the idea that the duration of suffering will not be the same to all who are punished." When you have read this, I am afraid you will be very much at a loss to determine, whether Richard Wright, or Richard Brothers ought to stand first as interpreters of sacred scripture. Mr. W. grants that the text is figurative. The words, few and many, are comparative, and therefore serve just as well as the terms light and heavy could do, to denote lesser and greater degrees of punishment. But I will not take up any more of your time in exposing this miserable quibble.

3. "As God is infinitely good, it is unreasonable to suppose he would have brought into being rational creatures, when he knew they would, after a few years' feverish existence, become completely miserable, and eternally remain so : it is impossible that a being who is infinitely good should totally abandon his rational offspring, much more keep them alive in torments as long as he himself exists." (Page 35.)

I grant it is both unreasonable and impossible that God should inflict endless punishment upon merely rational creatures ; and Mr. W. has considered men in no other light in this paragraph. He knows, I dare say, for what reason he was silent about their guilt and depravity. If God has nothing against them except their being "rational creatures," or "his rational off-

spring," I should think it both unreasonable and impossible that he should punish them, even with "a few years' feverish existence" in this world, much more that he should punish them in the world to come. Mr. W. does not suppose, I hope, that men will be punished because they happen to be rational; but if this should be the case, he need not be under any very serious alarm. I dare say he will come off as well as most of his neighbours. Do those deserve to be called rational creatures, who trample under foot the laws of God, despise his authority, defy his power and justice, reject his mercy in Christ Jesus, and blaspheme his holy spirit? Our Lord, instead of calling such profligate hardened sinners, God's rational offspring, tells them, "Ye are of your father, the devil."

But can the endless punishment of sinners be reconciled with the goodness of God? It must never be forgotten that God is a moral governor. He has given us laws for the direction of our conduct, because our good is inseparably connected with moral order. Obedience to his laws cannot be secured without penal sanctions; it follows, that the threatenings of the law spring from his goodness. All this Mr. W. will grant. The great question then is, how powerful must the threatening be, to preserve some tolerable degree of order? Some have supposed, (Mr. W., however, is not of the number,) that the threatening of endless punishment is necessary to the preservation of order, but that its infliction seems to be contrary to the goodness of God. This is opposing his love to his sovereignty. He cannot, as a governor, threaten to do what it would be inconsistent with his nature to execute. Must, or can, the punishment be of such a nature as to prove both corrective to the sufferer and exemplary to the world? But this involves in it the consideration of several other questions.

1. What is the state of the world? The most unbounded depravity and licentiousness prevail in those heathen countries where the doctrine of endless punishment is not believed; and even in christian countries,

where the doctrine is generally believed, not more than a very moderate degree of order is preserved. As far, therefore, as fact can go to settle this point, it confirms the expediency of threatening endless punishment.

2. Is every sinner improvable? This is matter of pure revelation, and is settled in these words: "It is impossible, to renew them again unto repentance."

3. Is the moral government of God so constituted, that punishment never fails to correct the sufferer? Come and see. "Many vices," says Mr. W., page 8, "involve men in outward troubles, debilitate both body and mind, shorten life, and while it continues, produce miseries which are at length terminated in a premature grave. Evil passions, ungoverned appetites, and irregular desires, never fail to torment the breast that harbours and indulges them." Thus, according to the divine constitution, there is no peace to the wicked. Now every man who is at all acquainted with the world, knows that, in thousands of instances, the punishments of the present life produce no change for the better in the minds of the sufferers. Does the punishment of death produce a moral change? Mr. W. shall answer this question. Page 15: "The mere circumstances of dying and being raised to life, can make no change in their moral state; they must rise as sinful, as guilty, as much exposed to the bitter fruits of sin, as they died: unless the laws established in the moral world were dissolved, and the nature of things totally changed, this must unavoidably be the case." Here, sir, you have a warm advocate for corrective punishment, asserting that the most dreadful punishment which can be inflicted upon sinners in this world, "can make no change in their moral state." I presume Mr. W. does not think that the punishments of the present life are inconsistent with the love of God, though he grants that in many cases they are not corrective; how then will he prove, that the love of God requires correction to be a necessary concomitant of punishment in the life to come?

4. What does revelation say about the nature and duration of future punishment? The sacred oracles represent it as exemplary and eternal. "Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 7.) After what I have said in my book, and in my last letter, about the meaning of the word *aionios*, I think I am fully warranted in assuming, that, in its application to future punishment, it cannot denote less than endless duration.

From this inquiry it appears that facts, the state of sinners' minds, the constitution of God's moral government, and divine revelation, all stand opposed to Mr. W.'s sentiment, and support mine. The threatening of endless punishment, then, is necessary to the preservation of order; order is necessary to the good of God's creatures; the threatening, therefore, must spring from the goodness, or love of God.

The good of society requires that murder should be punished with death, and therefore this penalty is usually annexed to that crime. But if the law which makes murder death to the criminal, be a good law, the execution of it cannot possibly be an argument against the goodness of the legislator. The law by which a murderer is cut off, was originally framed as much with a view to his benefit, as to that of any other individual. While he continued obedient, he had the same proof of the love of his sovereign which his fellow-subjects had: his awful end does not argue any change in the affection of his sovereign; it is owing solely to a change in his own conduct. And if it be no argument against the goodness of an earthly sovereign, that some wicked men are cut off forever from civil society, then neither is it any argument against the goodness of God, that some sinners are cut off forever from the society of heaven.

Mr. W. will not dispute the goodness of God towards those who arrive at glory: nor will he dispute that those who are adjudged to hell had the same

means and promises of salvation with those that go to heaven. There is no difference in religious privileges, and therefore no partiality in the divine affection. God loved the one as well as the other, and provided a Saviour and the means of happiness equally for both. To the one it is confessed he is good ; to the other his goodness is doubted. Why ? Because, though he desired their happiness, and would have made them happy, they resisted his gracious designs concerning them ! To urge the rejection of mercy as an argument against its existence, is the extreme of folly.

Mr. W. remarks, page 12, " We are not reduced to the sad dilemma of saying, God must sacrifice the good of individuals to secure the general good of his creatures, for a being of infinite wisdom and power can never be at a loss to combine both objects." It is a fact that he does not combine both objects, and therefore it is not worth while to inquire whether he can do it or not. Many thousands of the Israelites, when in the wilderness, were punished with death for their vices. Mr. W. has assured us, page 15, that " dying can make no change in their moral state." In all instances of this kind, then, the two objects not only are not, but, if we believe Mr. W., cannot be combined. The apostle is silent about correction, and represents their punishment as exemplary : " Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples : and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Cor. x. 11.) Cases occur every day, of men suffering for their vices, without being reformed. We may suppose many good things which God could have done, that he has not done. He could have made monkeys men, and men archangels ; he could have prevented the entrance of sin into the world, and he could immediately destroy it : at least so the matter appears to short-sighted mortals. But you know, sir, that our business is not so much with what God can do, as with what he has done, does, and will do. I have shown that he does not always connect correction with punishment ; Mr. W.

is, therefore, by affirming the contrary, "reduced to the sad dilemma" of contradicting the plainest facts in the world.

"4. God created all things for his own glory, being infinitely good, he could not make any rational creature without intending his happiness, and he can neither want will nor power to carry his intention into effect in due time; but the endless torments of sinners can no more gratify God than answer the benevolent end of their creation. If it be asked, if such be God's intention, why are not all made happy now? It is answered, it might with equal propriety be asked, why did not God fill the earth at once? Why is not man born in the full maturity of his powers? Why was not Christ raised up and sent in the first age of the world? And the plain answer to all such questions is, that God's designs are carried into effect gradually; that at present we see unfinished plans, which discover enough of wisdom and goodness to assure us of their final completion." (Pages 35, 36.)

I grant that many of God's plans are carried into effect gradually; but we must know that he has formed a particular plan, before we have a right to say, that he will carry it into effect. How does Mr. W. know that God has formed a plan to fill the earth? Does he learn it from what he sees in the world, or from what he reads in the word? Before Eve was created, Adam had no evidence that God had formed such a plan, and therefore he could not know that God intended to fill the earth. Mr. W. asks, "Why is not man born in the full maturity of his powers?" The first man was; and it is impossible that he should form any notion of the gradual plan which was afterwards pursued, till either God or time had explained it to him. Mr. W. asks again, "Why was not Christ raised up and sent in the first age of the world?" I beg leave to ask, could any man have known that God had a Son? or that he intended to send him into the world at all, if his advent had not been the subject of prophesy and promise? Before, then, we assume that God will restore all fallen

creatures, we must know that he has formed a plan to that effect. Mr. W. says, "God's plans are carried into effect gradually." It will follow, of course, that if God has formed a plan to bring all men to holiness, all men are gradually approximating to the gospel standard of moral excellence; but when we look around us in the world, instead of seeing all men gradually improving in virtue, we see the greater part of them quite destitute of it, and making a gradual and an awful progress in vice. Another part of this plan, according to Mr. W., is corrective punishment. But it has been shown that punishment is often inflicted without producing any moral change. The two prominent features, therefore, of a plan to restore all mankind to virtue and happiness, have no existence but in Mr. W.'s imagination; they are both opposed to plain matter of fact.

But if this plan to restore all lapsed intelligences cannot be inferred from what we see in the world, Mr. W. thinks it is clearly deducible from the perfections of God. This brings us to the former part of the argument. "God," says he, "created all things for his own glory; being infinitely good, he could not make any rational creature without intending his happiness; and he can neither want will nor power to carry that intention into effect in due time." If you have attended to this controversy, you will understand at once the reason why Mr. W. adds the words "in due time." He had said, in a former publication, that "God cannot act toward any creature, at any time, but from a principle of love"—"that he will never cease to desire their" (his creatures) "happiness;" and that, "if what is intended by God, what his soul desireth, should never take place, would it not prove either a deficiency in his wisdom or in his power?"* To this I replied in my book, page 33, "The above reasoning will apply against the introduction of misery with exactly the same force as against its endless continuance. For if God

* Hints on the Restoration, pp. 4, 5.

never can act towards any creature, at any time, but from a principle of love ; if this be accompanied with desires for their happiness, and if his wisdom and his power are engaged to fulfil his desires, then it must necessarily follow, that it is impossible for any creature, at any time, to be unhappy. As this conclusion cannot be admitted, the premises must be given up." I defy any man to overturn this reasoning. Mr. W. has now foisted in the words, in due time. He says, "God can neither want will nor power to carry that intention" (the intention to make all creatures happy) "into effect in due time." This due time is some distant time ; Mr. W. has not told us how far distant ; suppose we say ten thousand years, more or less. Will God have either more love to will, or more power to effect, the happiness of his creatures ten thousand years hence, than he has at present ? If not, how can his love and power engage him then any more than now to destroy sin and misery ? If it be said, because at that time sinners will have suffered the whole demerit of sin, the answer is, that the question is changed ; it is not love and power, but justice, which puts a period to suffering when the full penalty has been inflicted. The plain simple question is this, is the existence of sin and misery inconsistent with the perfections of God ? If so, they could never have existed for a moment ; if not, they may exist forever. I wish the Universalists would keep close to this question, and they would then soon be convinced that their doctrine cannot be proved from the divine perfections.

I do not deny, however, that God loves his creatures, and has made sufficient provision for their happiness ; but I do not suppose that everything relating to his creatures is caused by the perfections of God, for then none of them could ever have sinned, since God cannot be the cause of sin. Mr. W. has said nothing about moral liberty, though I have shown in my book that it is only upon this principle that we can rationally account for the introduction of sin and misery ; and it serves very well to reconcile their end-

less continuance with the perfections of God. It is a fact, that his love does not hinder him from making creatures free; and therefore his love cannot require him to destroy their liberty; for it would be the same as saying that God is obliged to destroy the work of his own hands. All the plans of divine love for the happiness of free, intelligent creatures, must have respect to their liberty; and if, through an abuse of that principle, the gracious designs of Heaven are frustrated, the blame attaches to the creature, and not to the Creator. To say a man is not good, because his bounty is sometimes bestowed upon objects that only abuse it, is to put their vices to his account, which is perfectly inconsistent with all our ideas of both justice and goodness.

“5. As God is immutable, he must always continue the same loving and merciful being which the scriptures now reveal; consequently, he never can become vindictive, and punish merely to destroy, or render miserable, the punished.” (Page 36.)

The immutability of the divine character makes against Mr. W.’s scheme. I have shown that God often punishes sinners in this world without reforming them; his mercy and love, therefore, so far as they are connected with punishment, must have some other end in view than the reformation of the sufferers: and since the character of God is immutable, it seems most probable that sinners will be punished for the same reason, and with a view to the same end, in the next world as in this: and should this be the case, what becomes of the restoration? I do not know how it may appear to you, sir, but to me it seems quite unaccountable, that Mr. W. should urge the unchangeableness of God as a reason why he should change both his measures and his end. We do not pretend that God punishes merely to destroy: we have said often enough, that punishment is necessary to preserve moral order, and this is what our opponents do not deny.

“6. Punishment must either be vindictive or cor-

rective ; if the latter, it perfectly agrees with the character of God, as a father, as a being whose nature is love, to inflict it ; but if the former, then it implies the existence of some principle in God contrary to love ; a principle of vindictiveness ; and the infliction of it is inconsistent with his pure goodness, as well as his paternity ; nothing is more evident than that vindictiveness and revenge can neither consist with, nor proceed from love." (Page 36.)

I dare say, sir, Mr. W. thinks we are fast enough now. But has he forgot, what I know he dare not deny, that punishment is exemplary. (See 1 Cor. x. 6, 11 ; Jude 7.) It is not true, then, that "punishment must be either vindictive or corrective ;" and, therefore, all that Mr. W. has said upon this supposition falls to the ground at once. Exemplary punishment is so far from proving the existence of a principle in God contrary to love, that it is love to the creation, as I have shown in the course of this letter, which prompts him to inflict it ; and Mr. W. knows that a man may suffer as an example to others, without being corrected himself.

"7. If God be infinitely good, which none will deny, every act of his must be an act of goodness ; but it never can be made appear, that to punish vindictively is an act of goodness ; consequently he cannot inflict vindictive punishment ; " of course the punishment he inflicts must be corrective ; and if corrective, it must be limited, it cannot be endless." (Page 36.)

I am no advocate for vindictive punishment. Mr. W. here, as in the former paragraph, takes it for granted that there is no medium between vindictive and corrective punishment. He is an advocate, however, when it suits his purpose, for exemplary punishment ; and he is at no loss to reconcile it with the goodness of God. I will give you his account of the matter, as an answer to the above. "From the consideration," says he, page 12, "that God cannot fail to seek the general good of the moral system, it follows, that it is impossible he should fail to punish wilful sinners ; seeing the good of the moral system requires that vice should be

rendered odious and abhorrent to the feelings of rational creatures, by having the most painful effects connected with it, and by its being marked with the highest displeasure of the supreme Governor." Now if "the general good of the moral system" requires, that particular offenders should suffer "the most painful effects," and "the highest displeasure" of God, then Mr. W. has furnished us with a principle of punishment which is neither vindictive nor corrective, and which perfectly reconciles eternal torments with divine love.

"8. As God doth not afflict willingly, but calls judgment his strange work, the punishment he inflicts cannot be a final end, but must be subservient to an end worthy of infinite goodness." This is exactly the case with exemplary punishment; it proposes "an end worthy of infinite goodness," namely, the good of the universe.

"Many instances are recorded in scripture of his punishing with a view to the moral good of the punished; and as he hath said he will not be always wroth, and speaks of the duration of his wrath but as a moment, in comparison of the continuance of his loving kindness, there seems a moral certainty that future punishment will be limited and corrective; for his nature can never change, nor he ever act contrary to his infinite goodness and mercy." (Pages 36, 37.)

That there are some "instances recorded in the scripture, of God punishing with a view to the moral good of the punished," I am willing to allow; but I have shown that there are many instances to the contrary. Two texts are referred to, for proof "that future punishment will be limited and corrective." The first is Isaiah lvii. 16: "I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth;"—with whom? You have the answer to this question in the preceding verse: "Him that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Mr. W. does not surely suppose, that this passage refers to a sinner humbled in hell. In the former part of the chapter, the prophet addresses himself to the wicked, who see the righteous perish without laying it to

heart ; who worship idols under every green tree ; who slay the children in the valleys, under the cliffs of the rocks ; and who trust in kings and armies for protection. Their fate is described, verse 13, " When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee : but the wind shall carry them away ; vanity shall take them." It is immediately added, " But he that putteth his trust in me, shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain ; and shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people. For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place ; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth," etc. The scene of this prophecy cannot be laid in hell, because there the righteous cannot perish, children cannot be offered in sacrifice to idols, nor can many other things take place which are mentioned in the passage. The plain sense of the passage is, that it contains a threatening of punishment to the wicked, and a promise of pardon to the penitent. But what has this to do with limited and corrective punishment in a future state ?

The other passage is Isaiah liv. 7—9. The whole chapter contains a prediction of the calling of the Gentiles under the gospel. It begins thus : " Sing O barren, thou that didst not bear ; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child : for more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord." This address is suitable to none but the Gentiles. They are represented under the image of a woman barren and desolate ; for they were excluded from that covenant of peculiarity which God entered into with the Jews. They are distinguished from " the married woman," who undoubtedly designates the Jewish nation. Their return to God under the gospel is finely expressed in the following lines of Lowth's translation :—

“For as a woman forsaken, and deeply afflicted, hath Jehovah recalled thee;
 And as a wife, wedded in youth, but afterwards rejected, saith thy God.
 In a little anger have I forsaken thee;
 But with great mercies will I receive thee again;
 In a short wrath I hid my face for a moment from thee;
 But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee;
 Saith thy Redeemer, Jehovah.”

This sort of imagery is familiar to every one conversant with the sacred writings, and there is no difficulty about its meaning. Our Lord and the apostle Paul both apply this prophecy to gospel times, (compare verses 1 and 13, with Gal. iv. 27, and John vi. 45,) when we know the Gentiles were recalled and received to favour again, after they had remained for so long a period, like a divorced woman, barren and desolate. The passage speaks of suffering; and I have no objection to the sufferings of the Gentiles being called punishment for their idolatry and immorality; but there is no mention made of their being improved by it; and I believe no one who has read the apostle Paul's description of them, (see Rom. chap. i. ii.,) will suppose that they were recalled under the gospel, because they had profited by their afflictions: we cannot well conceive of a greater excess of depravity, than that which reigned in the heathen world in the days of the apostle. This passage, then, which was brought to prove that future punishment will be both limited and corrective, has not the least allusion to either corrective punishment, or a future state!

If any further proof were necessary, that the woman addressed in this chapter cannot designate the inhabitants of hell, it may be collected from the last verse:—

“Whatever weapon is formed against thee, it shall not prosper;
 And against every tongue that contendeth with thee, thou shalt obtain thy cause.
 This is the heritage of Jehovah's servants,
 And their justification from me, saith Jehovah.”—LOWTH.

If the justified persons be the inhabitants of hell, in a

state of restoration, there cannot be found a being to form a weapon against them, or a tongue to contend with them.

Mr. W. does not refer us to another text of scripture. If he has, indeed, according to his promise, "stated the subject in a more correct and consistent manner," than heretofore, you may now judge, sir, pretty correctly, what support his cause can derive from the sacred oracles. If these be his best scriptural arguments, it was wisdom in him not to expose any more of them.

"9. God is the first cause and last end of all things; everything which takes place is under his government, and shall be subservient to his gracious designs; therefore it is morally certain he will make all things productive of ultimate moral good and happiness, to the whole rational creation." (Page 37.)

In what sense does Mr. W. understand the phrase, all things? One would suppose from the connexion, that it meant "everything which takes place under the government of God." If so, it includes sin; and then it is not true that God is the first cause of all things, for he cannot be the cause of sin; nor is it true that "he will make all things productive of moral good and happiness to the whole rational creation;" for to talk about people being made good and happy by sin, is like saying that the way to become clean is to wallow in the mire. If sin be left out of the paragraph, the paragraph cannot favour the restoration. I wish Mr. W. and his friends would consider the import of such passages as these: "We be slanderously reported, and some affirm that we say, let us do evil that good may come:—whose damnation is just. Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid." (Rom. iii. 8; vi. 1, 2.)

"The admission that future punishment will be limited and corrective, gives a greater latitude of meaning to many of the promises and declarations of God, and will be found to accord with the natural import of the scriptures." (Page 37.)

When Mr. W. has produced a single promise or declaration of God, which requires a greater latitude of meaning than is consistent with the doctrine of endless punishment, it will be time enough to say more upon this subject.

I have now, sir, given you all Mr. W.'s "leading arguments in support of the doctrine of limited and corrective punishment," and all the words which he employs in stating, proving, and defending them, except a few lines against annihilation, and a part of the last paragraph, which has nothing to do with the controversy. Mr. W. has told us, preface, page 5, "The arguments in favour of limited punishment are far from being exhausted." If the leading arguments which I have been reviewing, are the best he could select out of his store, it was undoubtedly very prudent of him to keep the rest out of sight. I remain,—

Dear sir, yours, etc.,

D. I.

LETTER IV.

TO THE REV. MR. BENSON.

DEAR SIR,

WE may now consider this controversy as brought to a close. You will, by this time, I believe, be very well satisfied, that what Mr. Wright has the assurance to call, more than an answer to my book, is, in reality, no answer at all. It is a feeble, ineffectual effort to support an expiring cause. You know I came forward in answer to a public and an insulting challenge. The Universalists themselves dragged me into this dispute. They, of course, were bound by every principle of honour and religion to give me either a direct and particular answer, or to preserve the silence of conscious inability. To pretend, under such circumstances, to

give more than an answer to a work, without quoting a line from it, is a sort of management which no man can have recourse to, whose cause is not desperate, and whose honesty is not doubtful. Mr. W. is at perfect liberty if he pleases, and if he thinks it will satisfy his party, to write fifty more such essays, and he shall receive no reply from me, if he will only show so much regard to justice, as to decline calling them answers to my book.

There is one thing, sir, which gives me peculiar satisfaction; and that is, the little support which even Mr. W. pretends now to derive to his cause from the scriptures. He has given up express revelation, and has adverted, as we have seen, to only three or four texts: and the misapplication of these has been so clearly pointed out, that I do not think he will have the confidence to bring them forward again. It may be said, to be sure, that as Mr. W. was only giving a summary of the arguments in favour of limited and corrective punishment, he undoubtedly omitted many texts which refer to the subject; but then it must be recollected that the arguments employed are called leading arguments; of course those texts are chosen which are supposed to give most support to his system; and since they are proved to be quite irrelevant, he had nothing to hope, nor we to fear, from the rest. This will settle the point with all those who make it a rule to receive all their religious opinions from the sacred fountain of religious truth.

After all that Mr. W. has said about the perfections of God, and we have seen that his arguments are derived principally from this source, the duration of future punishment is a question of pure revelation. We are not qualified of ourselves to judge how much punishment is due to sin, because we are sinners. If criminals were made judges in their own cause, would any of them be punished at all? And yet all impartial persons believe they deserve it. Besides, we cannot calculate the effects of sin, nor comprehend the extent of the moral government of God, the relations which

subsist betwixt the different parts of it, and the various ends which may be answered by the punishment of offenders ; and without a knowledge of these things, it is folly and arrogance in the extreme to question the justice of eternal punishment. Mr. W. has confessed that, "As all our knowledge respecting a future state must be derived from divine revelation, whatever men assert respecting future punishment, they are bound to prove from the scriptures." Here I join issue with him, and I hope he will keep close to this point. To the law and the testimony.

The pernicious influence of Mr. W.'s system upon the minds of the immoral, is a consideration of awful import. Nothing I think can be clearer than that the principles of the restoration deprive the threatenings of all their force. In Mr. W.'s reply to Dr. Ryland, he has excluded terror from the government of God, and has reduced the threatenings to nihility, by asserting, that men are not to be brought to love and obey God by having their minds inspired with tormenting fear, but by seeing his loveliness, and perceiving his love to them. Whether what I said upon that subject made any impression upon Mr. W. he has not told us; but at the conclusion of this essay he has changed his tone, and has laboured hard to terrify the wicked. To attempt this, however, upon restoration principles, is very inconsistent, as I shall demonstrate presently.

Mr. W. says, page 38, "I cannot content myself to lay down my pen without solemnly addressing immoral men, and careless professors of the gospel." If this address had not been called solemn, I should have thought it ironical. You shall have a few specimens of it.

"Think not that any of the opinions entertained by christians respecting future punishment can leave you anything to hope, while you go on in your evil practices, and continue to neglect the important duties of christianity." Now I insist upon it, that Mr. W.'s opinion leaves a man the hope, while he goes on in sin, that he shall be finally happy. He cannot have

the happiness itself while he lives in sin, but he may have the hope of it. The saints cannot be received into heaven while they continue in the body; but it would be truly ridiculous to say, that no saint, while in the body, can enjoy the hope of heaven. In fact it is only while people go on in sin that it is possible for them to exercise hope about this restoration; for when they become holy, they are not liable to be sent to hell, and therefore cannot hope to be delivered out of it.

“So long as that is the case” (that is, so long as men live in sin) “you have everything to fear, everything alarming to apprehend.” I affirm they have nothing to fear, if Mr. W.’s system be true. 1. What is the principle which induces the Almighty to inflict punishment? Mr. W. answers, love to the sinner. This principle cannot inspire fear, for no man can be frightened at the thought that God loves him: the thought is cheering. 2. What is the object of future punishment? According to Mr. W., the good and happiness of the sinner. This cannot beget fear; for no one can dread happiness: on the other hand, it is very desirable. But it may be said, that though neither the principle nor object of punishment is frightful, yet the quantum of it may be very alarming. A physician loves his patient, and proposes to restore him to health and happiness; but a painful operation may be necessary, and this may be terrifying. In reply, it may be said, that if the analogy betwixt bodily and mental diseases would hold, the doctrine of the restoration would be overturned, for some bodily diseases are incurable. Let us then inquire, 3. What is the quantum of future punishment? You will recollect, sir, that Mr. W. has said, only two pages back, that “punishment must either be vindictive or corrective.” Now if a third reason could be thought of, it is not true that punishment must be inflicted for one of these two. I have shown that punishment is exemplary, and he has himself admitted it in other parts of his essay; but it is excluded in the leading arguments of his doctrine. The admission of exemplary punishment

destroys four, out of the ten, of his leading arguments. (See 5, 6, 7, and 8, as quoted in the preceding letter.) If, therefore, a wicked man believe the doctrine of restoration upon the credit of these arguments, he cannot believe exemplary punishment; and since Mr. W. assures us that God "never can become vindictive," it follows, that the only object of future punishment is correction: of course, when the correction is effected, the punishment will cease. The question then is, how much punishment is necessary to the correction of the sinner? The answer is, just as much as the sinner pleases. The reason is this: virtue cannot be extorted; it must be voluntary: it is not the effect of necessity, but of choice: it depends upon the will. If this be denied, the absurdity will follow, that it is a virtue in flame to ascend, and in stone to descend, because they obey the law of nature. But if virtue depend upon the will, if it be voluntary, and the effect of choice, the subjects capable of it must have moral liberty. Since, therefore, the inhabitants of hell are supposed by Mr. W. to be capable of virtue, they must have moral liberty; and if so, they possess the power to become virtuous at any time; and since punishment is to terminate when virtue commences, the quantum of punishment which they receive, depends solely upon their own will. Now nothing can be more preposterous than an attempt to terrify people with the fear of a punishment which they can put an end to as soon as they choose.

Suppose Mr. W. should contend, however, that punishment is exemplary as well as corrective. I would wish to know whether the punishment will be continued, for the sake of example, after the sinner becomes virtuous? If not, my preceding remarks retain all their force; and if it will, I ask, to whom? There are only two supposable cases: either to the inhabitants of heaven, or to other beings created to probation.

1. Will the punishment of the sinners of this world be necessary to operate as a warning upon the inhabitants of heaven? If examples of punishment be necessary to prevent a second apostacy in heaven, this reason

applies equally at all times through all endless duration; the punishment, therefore, must be endless. 2. Will the punishment of the sinners of this world be necessary to warn other beings created to probation? If it be supposed that God will, in a single instance, create intelligent beings after the day of judgment, it may with equal propriety be supposed that he will repeat the act, at different periods, through eternity; and therefore, this reason of exemplary punishment will make it necessary to be eternal. Thus we see, that any reason which may be assigned for continuing punishment, after reformation is effected, is dangerous to the whole system; so singular a sentiment, therefore, it is probable, will not be adopted.

I grant there would be something terrifying even in limited punishment, if the duration of it were independent of the will of the sufferer; but a wicked man who embraces the doctrine of restoration can scarcely forbear thinking the matter over in his mind thus: "Suppose I go to hell, how long will the punishment continue? The object of my punishment will be my reformation, and therefore when that is effected, my punishment will end. Every argument drawn from the love, and mercy, and goodness of God, against everlasting misery, proves that no more punishment will be inflicted than what is absolutely necessary. But I can repent whenever I please; consequently, whenever I please, I can terminate my sufferings." Is it possible, after this, that he should have any dread about going to hell?

"You are nourishing, by the guilt you are accumulating, the worm that will prey upon your vitals, and kindling the fire that will consume you." Does Mr. W. suppose that a soul can be restored to health and soundness by a worm preying upon its vitals? and that a fire can both consume and refine it?

"Without repentance and obedience, without that faith which worketh by love, you are lost, you must perish." Can a man perish under that punishment which renders him imperishable?

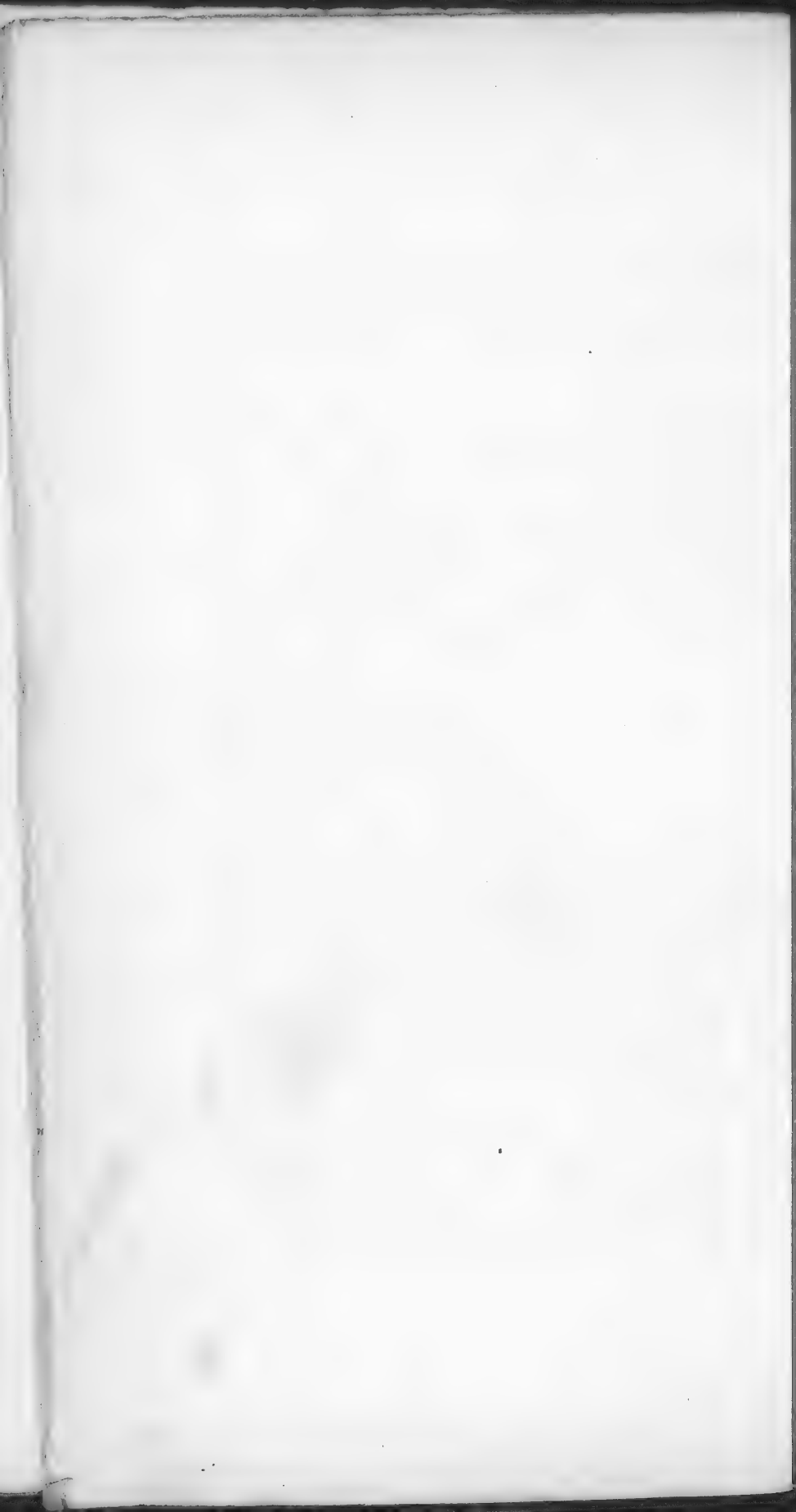
"Suffer not your own passions, nor the evil example of others, to lead you on to your destruction." If they should refuse to take Mr. W.'s advice, and, therefore, be destroyed, they cannot possibly be restored, for destruction and restoration are two perfect opposites.

"If, however, you refuse to be instructed, if you continue to disobey the gospel, and go on in the paths of iniquity, nothing remains but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation: the only prospect before you is that of a most awful punishment, the nature and duration of which are involved in such terrifying obscurity, as should even now make your hearts tremble, and fill your souls with anguish." If nothing remains to the impenitent "but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation," then there remains no hope of the restoration. And if the duration as well as the nature of a most awful punishment be hid in terrifying obscurity, why did not Mr. W. leave it there? What presumption is it in him to pretend to demonstrate, that the duration of punishment must be limited, when he tells us, that God has involved its duration in terrifying obscurity!

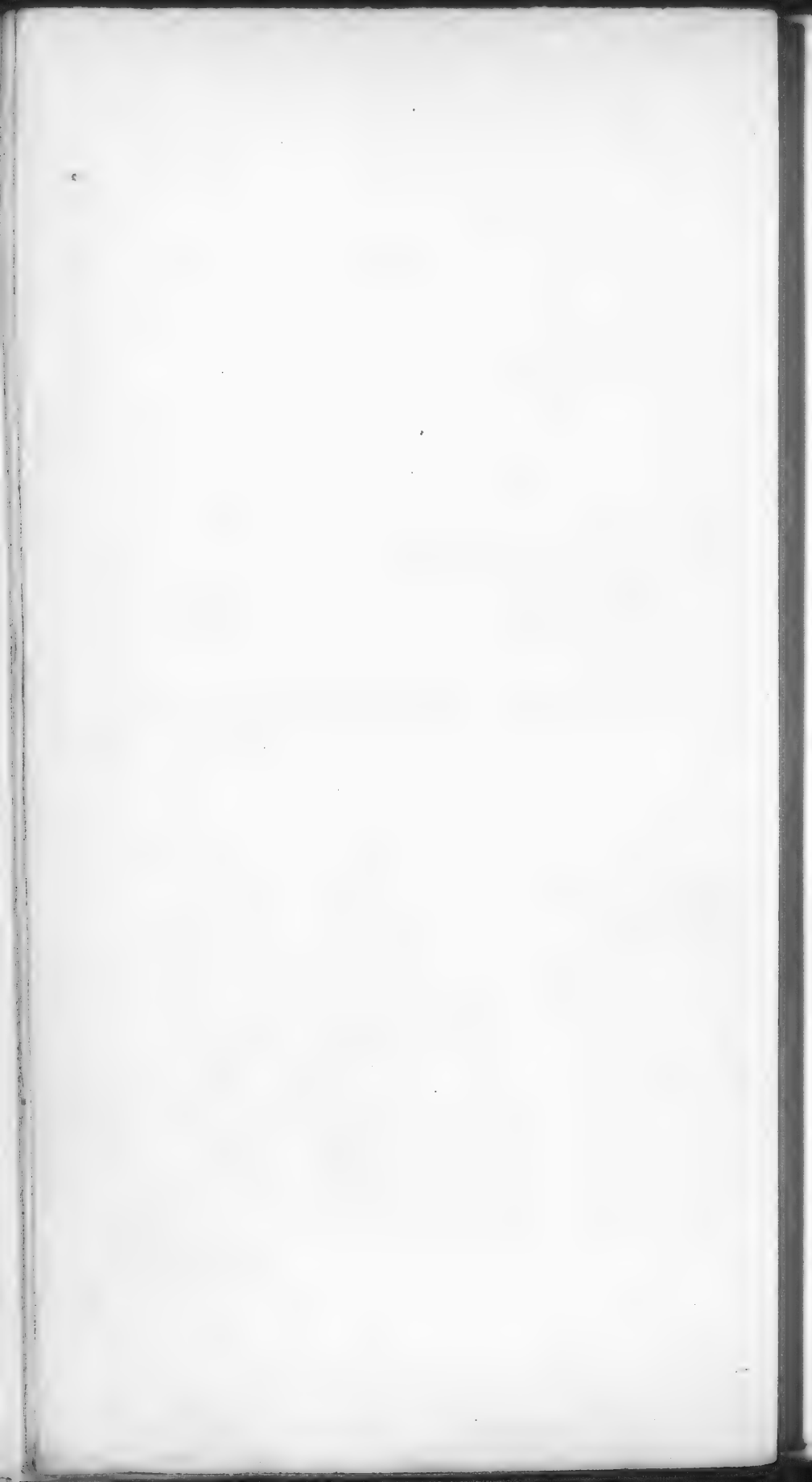
What a pity Mr. W. did not furnish his readers with an Universalist vocabulary, containing his new sense of the terms, nothing, anything, vitals, consume, perish, destruction, etc.; for without such a help, it will be impossible for many people to reconcile his concluding address with his doctrine of restoration. Most immoral men, who believe his doctrine, will find it difficult to refrain from laughing at his exhortation. I am almost afraid I have exhausted your patience, I therefore hasten to subscribe myself,—

Dear sir, yours, etc.,

D. ISAAC.



SKETCHES OF SERMONS.



SKETCHES OF SERMONS.

SKETCH I.

“THEREFORE I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.” (Mark xi. 24—26.)

MAN is said to be prone to run into extremes; and of the truth of this assertion we have but too much evidence, as extremes are by no means rare.

Some think that prayer is altogether useless, because unavailing; others think that it is useless with respect to certain individuals, who have been made merely to show forth the power and wrath of God; some think we have authority to ask but little of the Almighty, while others think we have warrant to ask and expect whatever we will in prayer: and were there no other scripture to be found giving encouragement in this particular, this before us is thought to be quite sufficient for the purpose; for, saith the Saviour, “I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”

That all but the last of these views on the subject of prayer are extremes, I surely need not stay to prove; and that the last itself is such, will be made apparent as we proceed in offering a few remarks.

I. On the encouragement here given to prayer.

II. On the things pre-requisite to success in it.

I. On the encouragement given to prayer.

That it is not an unlimited encouragement that is here given is evident from hence, that "God heareth not sinners." This is a sentiment known to, and admitted by all, who have any light in them. For sinners will ask for anything but grace; and God cannot give anything but grace without restriction.

2. A man must not only be under the influence of grace before his prayer can be regarded, but he must ask things in themselves lawful, before it can be done. We are, for instance, to pray for the conversion of the world, but we may not pray for its conversion this moment, because God is doing this work by means, which such a prayer would have him set aside. We should like to know whether, in very deed, the planets are inhabited, and by what kind of beings; but we may not pray that we may be transported in the body to them that we may see, nor yet that a messenger may be sent to tell us, since God has promised nothing of the sort, and as this would be contrary to nature.

3. Forgiveness is that which we are here more particularly encouraged to ask, (see verse 26,) though not that exclusively.

For this we are directed to pray every day. We are not only to pray every day, "Give us this day our daily bread," but we are to add, "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." The holiest person that is, has need to offer this petition, as such an one sees his defects more than others; such persons have more light, and therefore see the impropriety of little things, which others with less light cannot see.

But while we have encouragement to pray, we must not lose sight of the fact, that—

II. The following things are pre-requisite to success in prayer:—

1. Desire. "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray."

When we proceed to ask anything of God, we are to take care that there be a desire in our souls corresponding to the petition which is presented, for this is

the spirit of prayer : and as the body without the spirit is dead, so prayer without desire is dead also.

2. Faith. "Believe that ye receive, and ye shall have them." This is not to be understood believe that ye have them, and ye have them ; for here we have both the present and the future tense or time employed. Receive the promise of God, and on that ground your expectation of receiving, and ye shall receive things prayed for in due time.

3. Charity. "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any," etc. Note the stress that is laid on this. One of the prime curses of the fall is the malignity of our nature, which inclines and prompts us to revenge injuries, insults, etc. It is this divides families, neighbourhoods, and kingdoms. "From whence come wars and fightings," etc. This must be rooted out, or we can neither retain, nor obtain forgiveness.

You perhaps will tell me, that Luke says, (xvii. 3,) "If thy brother repent, forgive him." God will not pardon us without repentance : and we need not attempt to be more merciful than he is. But remember that the words, "If he repent," do not imply that this is to be the only or even the necessary condition of our forgiveness ; but an additional reason for it. And before we talk of being as merciful as God, let us do as much to bring them to repentance, as he has done to bring us to it. Were we to give them all we have, it would not be equal to the gift of an only son. But have we not hindered their repentance, instead of having forwarded it ?

Besides, the reasons for God's showing mercy and ours are not the same. God cannot exempt us from suffering in the next world without repentance ; but we may let them live in this world without punishing them.

We are not impartial, and therefore might exact more repentance than is due ; and we are often most in fault.

Remember too that God is our governor, but we are not theirs ; therefore there is weight in that precept,

“Avenge not yourselves.” If, therefore, you have ought against any, whether they have repented or not, forgive them, that you may be forgiven, if you are not, and if you are, that you may continue so.

And if you would have the blessed God to take pleasure in bestowing every good thing liberally upon you, in answer to prayer, cherish a forgiving and benevolent disposition after his example; and then your right to his promises, and to be heard of him, will be indisputable and evident.

SKETCH II.

“Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord.” (Zech. i. 3, 4.)

NEED we any other proof of man’s fallen and alienated state than this fact, that no one turns to his God, the author of his being, and all his blessings, without invitation, intreaty, and promise, and the far greater portion of mankind not with them?

The words of the text were God’s words by his prophet Zechariah to the Jews, for whom he had done so much in making them a people, delivering them from Egypt, settling them in Canaan, ridding them of their adversaries, hedging them about with laws and ordinances, etc., etc.; and yet he had to intreat them to turn to him, and intreated them in vain too. (See verses 4—6.)

Here we cannot but remark the similarity of conduct between the people of that age and those of the present: the prophet might be describing the manners of the present, rather than of that age, so strong is the likeness between them. Whence we gather,—

I. That man’s natural state is characterised by his departing from his God.

He has in him an evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God.

He is alienated from the life of God through the ignorance and blindness of his heart. (Ephes. iv. 18.) Nay he is an enemy to God by wicked works ; (Col. i. 21 ;) and, therefore, turning to God is conversion. "Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings." Which means, not only a renunciation of evil, but a return to duty. Turning to a lawful king from an usurper, implies an espousal of his cause, a return to duty, and obedience to the laws. But our turning to the Lord includes this additional circumstance,—the pardon of our past rebellions, which can only be had through the all-availing death and intercession of the Son of God. Mark,—

II. That man's conversion from this alienated and wandering state, not only may, but ought to be immediate, and in such a case must be sudden. "Turn ye, now, immediately."

1. This was the doctrine of all the prophets. See the text. See Jer. xxv. 4, 5 : "And the Lord hath sent unto all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them ; but ye have not hearkened nor inclined your ear to hear. They said, turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land," etc. And in Psalm cxix. 60, the Psalmist says, "I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments."

2. This is not less the doctrine of the evangelists and apostles. Thus Peter and Andrew, James and John, were called. (Matt. iv. 18—22.) Thus were the 3,000 called on the day of pentecost. (Acts ii. 41.) Thus were Cornelius and his friends called. (Acts x. 1—6, and 44—48.) Thus was the jailor called. (Acts xvi. 27—34.) And such seems to be the principle on which salvation is bestowed under the gospel. "Behold, now is the accepted time : behold now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

3. God not only requires men instantly to turn to him, but as an inducement to obedience promises as

instantly to turn to them. "Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts." And in Ezek. xvii. 27, we read that "when the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." And of this principle we have a beautiful illustration in the parable of the prodigal son; who was no sooner determined on returning to his father's house, and had commenced his journey, than his father, while he was yet a great way off, seeing him, ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

At these sudden conversions much umbrage is taken, and strong objections are made; and those conversions that take place more leisurely and gradually, are generally more acceptable and made account of. But let us now in the—

III. Place examine these leisurely and gradual conversions a little, that are so much approved. And,—

1. Is there any allowance given to a gradual turning away from sin? Are we required to turn away from swearing to-day, but permitted to continue in our drunkenness until to-morrow? Or, are we required to leave off our fraudulence to-day, but allowed to remain in our adulteries until to-morrow? etc. Or,—

2. Is the promise of pardon only to be gradually unfolded and accomplished? Are we only to have as it were one eye opened to-day and the other to-morrow; or are we only to have one sin pardoned to-day, and another to-morrow, and a third on the third day? etc., I know,—

3. That gradual conversions are considered more likely to stand, and prove permanent: but the question is not fairly put. Many more begin the gradual work and come to nothing, than fall away from instantaneous conversion. For a proof of this I appeal to your own consciences. How often have you begun this gradual work? Many of the gradual converts fall away; but they do this gradually, and so excite no surprise or notice. It is,—

4. Objected, that often, if not for the most part, those who are suddenly converted are very ignorant, and therefore likely to fall away: true; and the subjects of the gradual work are not all Solomons. The ignorant know the main things; and they must join the church to be fully instructed and guided. Acts ii. 41: "They continued stedfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship," etc.

SKETCH III.

"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." (Rom. iii. 31.)

In verses 20, 21, and 28, the apostle sets aside the law in the great business of a sinner's justification; and he does it for the purpose of excluding boasting. (Verse 27.)

But though works cannot justify us, they are necessary in other respects; and therefore they are not made void through faith. But observe,—

I. That he who objects to faith as making void the law, forgets that he makes void the law through divine mercy, if not through faith; for,—

1. According to his scheme, the penalty of the law, which has been richly merited, is neither suffered by the sinner himself, nor by any substitute for him; mercy is to make it void; and,—

2. As to the precepts of the law, some make nearly half of them void by setting their good works against their bad ones; and as their obedience is generally much in arrears, they make the far greater part of the law void through the principal part of life; and these arrears are seldom, if ever, brought up.

Some, again, make void the law for the best part of a man's days, by maintaining that young people are neither expected nor required to be religious,—

While some others make all that of the law void which they are unable to perform, contending that God does not require impossibilities of his creatures.

These are, however, obliged to admit that they have not kept as much of the law as they might have done; they must, therefore, make some more of it void, or they will be inevitably lost. But if we are not obliged to obey all we can, the obligation must depend upon the will, and then the whole law is void. We remark,—

II. That the law is not made void by faith.

1. The penalty of the law is not made void by it; this is demonstrated by the fact, that Christ, in whom we believe for justification, and by whom we receive it, has suffered its penalty in our stead.

2. And that its precepts are not made void through faith, any one can see; for every believer in Jesus frankly acknowledges his obligation to keep its precepts, confessing that he is not without law to God, but under law to Christ. That for this very purpose, God has put his Spirit within him, and written his law in his inward parts.

Besides, faith gives the disposition to obey, bringing an apprehension of Christ's love, and a feeling of love to him into the heart, and working by it. Faith working by love is mentioned in Galatians v. 6, which will explain this matter.

And faith procures the power to obey, according to St. Paul. (Rom. viii. 1—4.)

And so far is faith from making void the law, by superseding good works, that though it will not allow them to possess any power to purchase heaven for us, it does require them to fit us for heaven. And,—

3. So far as the doctrine of justification by faith from nullifying or setting the law aside, that the apostle deprecates the thing in the strongest manner. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

No lover of christian holiness, no truly converted person, and none but a downright and barefaced antinomian would wish the law of God to be set aside, even if he were at liberty to wish the thing without sin, and had power to effect his wish.

On the contrary, it is,—

4. The wish, intention, and joy, of the true christian to establish the law.

Not that the law needs additional importance and stability, or could have them from the best of men if it did.

It nevertheless is the sincere desire and diligent endeavour of every believer in Christ to make the necessity and perpetuity of the law manifest, and to bring all men, especially all christian men, to acknowledge and regard it as such.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. By the text we may test the soundness of our theological creed on two important points of doctrine,—justification by faith, and the necessity of the law under the gospel.

2. By the text too we may test the solidity of our christian experience. If we reject the doctrine of justification by faith, we are not justified; and if we set aside the law under the gospel, we are neither partakers of the christian's nature, nor leading a christian life.

3. The more we regard the great landmarks set up in the text, and the better is the proof of our being the subjects of redemption as it is in Jesus, and of our being in the way to perfect holiness and heaven.

SKETCH IV.

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying,” etc. (Matt. xiii. 25—30.)

THE whole of mankind are divided into two classes, good and bad; the visible church, the same. The bad would have the good rooted out; and some, who have some goodness in them, but who scarcely know what spirit they are of, would have all the bad not only rooted out of the church, but out of the world; but God says

not so; let both grow together until the harvest. In this parable we notice,—

I. The origin of evil.

This is spoken of under the figure of tares, sown in the field of the world by the devil. (See verses 38, 39.) What the tares were literally, it is difficult to say. That they did not much resemble wheat is evident from hence, they were discerned as soon as they sprung out of the ground. The expressions employed, "Let both grow together until harvest," show that they were known as tares, long before harvest. They were not spurious wheat, nor yet hypocrites, affecting to be good, and accounted as such; but they denote sinners, of all sorts and degrees. Notice,—

2. The tares were sowed while men slept.

(1.) These words convey no censure on the men for sleeping. They must sleep; they are not charged with idleness; nor are they charged with trifling, nor yet with any dereliction of duty, in not preventing the sowing of the tares.

And what they say to the proprietor of the field betrays no sense of guilt.

(2.) The men are called servants of the householder, which I take to be the same with the reapers, who are expressly called angels. (Verse 39.)

(3.) The design of the parable is to show, that as weeds are unavoidable in the field, so sin is unavoidable in the world; it springs out of the active and deep-rooted enmity of the devil, and the moral liberty of man. Observe,—

3. The devil carries on his operations secretly.

While men slept, he came and sowed his tares, and then went his way, so that the operation of sowing the tares was not observed either by the householder or by his servants.

The vegetation of evil in the heart is but too often unperceived until the tares begin to spring and show themselves, and then our attention is drawn to them. Observe,—

I. The parable assigns a reason why God permits

the tares to grow among the wheat until harvest time, or why he bears with sinners: "Lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat also." Here we see,—

1. The tares could not be destroyed without injuring the wheat; the wicked could not be rooted out without endangering the injury of the righteous. The safety and good of his people is the secret principle of his administration.

For the righteous and the wicked are often united by local habitation; they dwell in the same place, in the same house. As Lot in Sodom: Abraham said, "Wilt thou slay the righteous with the wicked? That be far from thee to do after this manner; to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee." The wicked ought to know to whom they are beholden for being spared.

Besides, the righteous and the wicked are often united by interest. A wicked husband and a godly wife; wicked parents and godly children, or the contrary; a godly master and wicked servants, or *vice versa*.

2. Though tares can never become wheat, they that are bad may become good; sinners may become saints; and thus the principles of the divine government may be more illustriously displayed.

3. God does not protract the lives of all wicked men. Some he may root up, without any injury to the wheat. Besides,—

4. God's proceedings are not a rule of government for the church. The field is the world, not the church. Neither are they a rule for magistrates; men cannot discriminate as he does. God will have sinners punished by the magistrate and by the church, for sins against the welfare of society. He will bear with them in the sins committed against himself until the harvest. We ought not to complain, as it is the fault of society, if the grosser sins of men are not punished.

His administration is for eternity, ours is for time;

his mercy reigns here, his justice hereafter; both mercy and justice with us must have their scope in this life.

Jehovah's reason for present delay of punishment is not that justice is no more, but that it shall be exercised more particularly in the future world; whereas ours must be exercised here, or it cannot be at all. Besides,—

5. If all sinners were punished here, the equity of the divine government would not in many cases be apparent, as some great sinners seem to men to be good, and are so accounted of.

Besides, if justice never were delayed, there would be no room for the exercise of mercy and goodness, and so the character of the divine Being would be but partially and defectively made known; while,—

6. The righteous themselves have their graces exercised by the wicked, and profit by their trials; so that they are gainers by this mode of government.

SKETCH V.

“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but the man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” (Gal. iii. 11—14.)

BUT can a man be justified in the sight of God on any principle? Undoubtedly. If by justification in the sight of God, were meant, man's being proved innocent before him, he could not be so justified. But, if by being justified in his sight, be meant his being excused the endurance of the law's penalty, which he had merited, and his being treated afterwards as though his right to life had not been forfeited, then he may, transgressor though he has been, be justified in the sight

of God ; not on principles of law, that is evident, seeing the law cannot, without a suicidal act, excuse him from the endurance of its penalty, who has violated its precept : but on gospel principles, the breaker of law may be justified in the sight of God, seeing he may believe in God, as Abraham the father of all believers did, and so his faith may be counted unto him for righteousness.

But let us inspect this doctrine more carefully.

1. The law here means the moral law.

This is manifest from verse 10 : “ For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse ; for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” (Compare with Deut. xxvii. 15—26.)

This law is against all idolatry, impiety, and wickedness, both public and private.

2. Verses 11, 12, inform us, that the man who does them, that is, the things enjoined by the law, shall live in them. But a man could not live by doing the things which the law of ceremonies commanded : for the Jews, who observed that law, and not the moral, were condemned.

And this moral law was not of faith ; for obedience to it made no man a believer.

3. The case of Abraham’s justification shows clearly enough, that the law by which justification cannot be had, is the moral, not the ceremonial law. He was not under the ceremonial law, and yet he was not justified by the law he was under, which must have been the moral, but by faith. The only ceremony he was under, was circumcision ; but he was justified by faith, and that before he was circumcised. Besides,—

4. The case of the heathen, as stated in verse 8, fully shows that the apostle is denying justification to be by the moral law ; they were under moral law, though not under the letter of it ; (Rom. ii. 12—15 ;) but they were never under the ceremonial law ; yet were they not justified by the law they were under,

but by faith. (Verse 8.) And that there is no justification by the moral law, appears,—

5. From the fact that a single violation of it brings death, or, at least, a liability to it, and ultimately the thing itself. (See verse 10.) So if a man made a graven image, he was under the curse, though he had not broken the other laws. So in human codes: if a man has committed murder, it is no justification to him that he has kept the rest of the laws.

And seeing there is no such thing as obtaining justification by the law, hence,—

II. The necessity of Christ's being made a curse for us, or of his dying for us. (Verse 13.) For,—

1. This great blessing comes to us through Christ; (verse 14;) he having suffered in our stead, and there being merit in his sufferings; hence, to him, in the way of recompence and honour, is given the right of justifying all those for whom the blessing is reserved. And,—

2. For whom is this blessing reserved? For those who believe in him: "For him hath God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 25, 26.) Whoever, therefore, receives this doctrine, and, trusting in the merit of the Redeemer's sufferings, claims this remission that is promised, to him is the benefit invariably given. For now, the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference." (Rom. iii. 21, 22.)

3. This dependence on the Redeemer's merit, brings the Spirit of that Redeemer into the believer's heart, to attest its acceptance; and while the obligations of law, as to the past, are cancelled through the death of Christ, the demands of the law, as to the future, are

observed and kept through the Spirit of Christ which dwelleth in us. And it is this inclination to walk by law, which the indwelling Spirit of Christ imparts, that provides against any abuse of this gracious doctrine.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Seeing we are all sinners, we are under the curse ; and ought to lay this fact to heart, and to mourn over it deeply.

2. Seeing none can be justified without faith, have you got it ? Do you trust in Christ ? Have you received the Spirit of Christ ? Are you keeping the law ?

3. Do you want salvation ? Endeavour to rest on the veracity of God's word ; pray for faith, and cherish the expectation of being blessed now.

SKETCH VI.

" He that is not with me is against me ; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. (Matt. xii. 30.)

If this is true, then there is no neutrality in religion ; Christ and the devil divide the world between them. In which of these kingdoms are you ?

In earthly kingdoms neutrality is not always permitted ; but if disallowed where no allegiance is due, that is tyranny ; and if allegiance is refused where it is due, that is opposition to the prince, and will be marked by him when he shall have seated himself upon his throne.

Apply these observations to the kingdom of Christ, and you will catch the spirit of the text, and at once be able to judge of the perilous condition of those who are not with Christ, and who gather not with him ; such are considered, and will be treated, as persons against him, and as scattering abroad. But,—

I. What is implied in being with Christ, and gathering with him ?

1. A sincere and hearty affection to his person and cause, which can have no place in those who know him not, and who think not with him.

And even those who know something of him, and have similar views, cannot have a sincere, much less a hearty, affection to him, unless they have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of their sins; and that fact attested to them by the Holy Ghost dwelling in their hearts.

2. It implies unfeigned and zealous efforts in his favour.

As the world lieth in the wicked one, no effort can be made in behalf of Christ, and especially no zealous effort, without subjecting ourselves to reproach, to hatred and malice, to opposition and persecution, and every species of evil for his sake; and hence it must be evident that such efforts in behalf of Christ can never spring from a heart destitute of love to him; and can only flow from, and be supported by, a spirit that loves him most ardently and determinately.

3. It implies union with his people, for it is union that gives strength; for where that is wanting, the greater the number of parts, and the greater is the confusion and the weakness; but the more numerous the parts are, (if closely united,) and the greater the strength. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, but a kingdom closely knit together, and well compacted, what can it not effect, both in the way of resistance and of conquest?

And in the cause of Christ, strength, yea, and much strength, is required; for the foes of Christ are strongly leagued together; (Rev. xvii. 12, 13;) but the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. But,—

II. How is it that he who is not with Christ is against him? How? Why,—

1. Every man has some influence. If he be talented and cultivated, or talented but uncultivated, or even if he be destitute both of cultivation and talent, yet will he have influence with persons like himself; and the more of talent and cultivation any man has, and the larger will be his sphere of influence. And though

such a man may not intend his influence to operate to the prejudice of the Redeemer's cause, yet so it will work, if it be not with, or for him.

2. Does any man say, but my character is good, and therefore cannot be against Christ. To such an one I answer, but the world and the devil will have the benefit of your character, if you do not ally yourself to Christ and his people; for the better you are, the more will you be appealed to in proof that union with the church is not necessary to salvation, even if union with Christ himself be so. But,—

3. If you may be good without being with Christ, or if you are under no obligation to be with him; then others, and all, may be good without being with him; and none are under any obligation to be with him, and so there will be no church.

But if there be no church, there will be no ministers, for the church is to send them; and there will be no sacraments, there being none to administer or receive them; and there will be no ordinances, as union is necessary to their observance; and there will be no christianity; the above institutions being essential to it, and no grace being administered without them.

Nothing could there be under such circumstances, but mere philosophical speculations, of no utility whatever. How true then is the doctrine of the text, "He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Before, then, we can gather with Christ, we must ourselves be gathered to him, or be with him.

2. Being with Christ is not enough; if we have opportunity, we must gather with him; and plenty there are to be gathered, seeing few, as yet, are gathered by him.

3. And let us be animated to greater zeal and diligence in this work, seeing we begun so late to gather with him, and have done so little.

SKETCH VII.

"And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth." (Acts ix. 8—11.)

THE arrest of Saul of Tarsus, when on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus, to persecute and bring to punishment such as he should find calling on the name of the Lord Jesus, whether male or female, was a remarkable event, furnishing most conclusive evidence of the truth of christianity, and of his own conversion to God.

His previous enmity to Christ and his cause, would render him proof against any premature surrender of his principles; while the firmness of his nerve would secure him from the assaults of superstition. The vision did not in anywise alarm him; nor was it until after he had learned that it was Christ that had arrested him, that he trembled, and was astonished, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "And the Lord said unto him," etc. Here observe,—

I. The poignancy of his conviction.

That his conviction was powerful and oppressive, appears from hence, that he was three days and neither ate nor drank. (See verse 9.) Some, having been kept without either meat or drink for that time, have been perfectly exhausted. (See 1 Sam. xxx. 12.) And when we call to mind that it was not for want of food, but because the distress of his mind would not permit him to take it, that he neither ate nor drank for that time, we are sure that his distress must have been great.

The same degree of conviction is not necessary in

all. Some conviction all must have ; but not to the same amount, or produced after the same manner : those on the day of pentecost were not labouring under conviction for one day, and the jailor at Philippi not for one hour.

Great trouble is, of itself, no proof of conversion.

Cain was in great trouble when he said, Genesis iv. 13, " My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth," etc.

And Judas was in great trouble when he brought again the wages of his covetousness, and threw down the money, saying, " I have betrayed innocent blood."

But neither of these men was converted by his trouble, great as it was : it would have led to it had it been rightly improved, as conversion is the fruit which conviction is designed to produce.

A parent will endeavour to adapt his correction to the disposition of his child ; and thus it is that God deals with his children and creatures : have your convictions terminated in your conversion ?

Great parts and learning, instead of preventing deep convictions, often add much to their depth and poignancy : Paul was neither weak nor ignorant ; and yet a mere worldling would have thought him mad, so were his feelings and fears awakened and harrowed up. But,—

II. Observe his conduct under his convictions : " For behold he prayeth."

This distinguished him from Cain, who went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, (see Gen. iv. 16,) instead of humbling himself, and suing for pardon, and for liberty to remain in his presence.

It distinguished him from Judas, who, under his trouble, instead of humbling himself before his God, and praying for the forgiveness of his crying sin, went and hung himself. (Matt. xxvii. 5.)

But Saul betook himself to prayer. As a pharisee, he doubtless had often bowed the knee formally in

prayer, or had stood and prayed formally ; but now he prayed with his spirit, and in the Spirit.

Prayer would be difficult to him who knew not the promises which christianity held forth of pardon. You know them, but think they are not for you : well ; but this should not prevent you from praying, any more than it did Saul : he would think his case all but desperate, as he had been a persecutor, and injurious, and yet he prayed. What then should preclude your prayers ? Can you adduce an instance in which prayer was sincerely and perseveringly presented to God through Jesus Christ, and yet unheard ? It was not Saul's prayer ; for rather than his prayer should not be heard, God appeared to Ananias in a vision, and sent him to Saul expressly to recover his sight, and to assure him of the Lord's favour and blessing. (See verses 11—18.) And if he heard Saul's prayer when thus presented, he will hear any and every man's prayer that shall be offered to him in like manner, and with like faith.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Let not any man imagine, that because no such steps have been taken to convert him, that therefore he has no need of conversion ; every man has need of it who has been an alien and an enemy to God.

2. Let not any one suppose that since he needs conversion, God will bring it about by miracle ; and that, until he does this, he is blameless, though unconverted.

3. Since we all need conversion, and have the means for use ; and since the safety, happiness, and welfare of every man depend entirely upon this change, let every man act as his understanding, interests, and dignity require him to do, and as his God enjoins.

SKETCH VIII.

“And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, follow me; and let the dead bury their dead. (Matt. viii. 19—22.)

MANY in that day were ready to follow him, imagining that it would be to their worldly advantage; and when our Lord knew this to be the fact, he failed not to test their sincerity, by informing them what awaited them on becoming his disciples.

But notwithstanding the replies which were made in these cases, and the information that was thus given, so seldom are the scriptures consulted, and so little are their statements reflected on, that the same unfounded expectations of worldly advantage, by becoming his followers, are still entertained by some, perhaps we might say by many; and hence there is need to reiterate our Lord's replies again and again.

In doing this allow me,—

1. To show what is meant by following him.

There can, I think, be no doubt, but that the miracles mentioned in the preceding verses had satisfied this man, that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah, and that he was now intending to set up a temporal kingdom; and being desirous of securing some temporal advantage in it, he made this tender of his services.

What must have been his surprise, and how must it have damped his ardour, when he received our Lord's reply?

And if he thought, as many do this day, that it is purely a matter of choice, and not obligatory, on any to follow him, he would be more surprised still to hear our Saviour answer as he did.

Many now think that they can be religious or not, just as they please, without incurring any blame what-

ever. Hence, if you charge them with being guilty of any misconduct, they think that they make you a pertinent and a sufficient reply by saying, We do not make any profession of religion. But,—

2. Many who acknowledge themselves to be under obligation to follow Christ, when it can be done without subjecting themselves to damage, or to any material inconvenience, yet think that the obligation is not binding on them, when compliance with it would greatly interfere with their worldly interests. Then religion must for certain give way to the world. And,—

3. It not unfrequently happens, that even when the obligation is tacitly, and to all appearances frankly acknowledged, it is put off for awhile, as in verse 22, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." Here the nature of the excuse merits your notice. He did not ask leave to continue in sin a little longer; no, not in the less enormous and more fashionable sins; but he requested permission for delay, to attend on what was more laudable: "Suffer me first to go and bury my father."

So it was with the old world: "They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold," etc.

So it was under the gospel: one had bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it; another had bought five yoke of oxen, and he must go and prove them, etc.

So it is with us: the young have their pleasures, which they retain a little longer; when they are settled in life, when married, when less encumbered, then they will attend to religion. These seem not at all aware of the hurtful tendency of business, when not prosecuted on christian principles. But permit me,—

4. To remind you of the danger of deferring your compliance with the obligation you are under to follow Christ.

1. Young people by delay will become more familiarized with sin of every sort and degree; it consequently will appear less outrageous and evil; and to yield to it will become less dreadful and irksome, and habits of

iniquity will be acquired and strengthened daily, until you find it most difficult, and next to impossible, to subdue, and thus your salvation will ultimately be put in very great jeopardy.

2. Aged persons, by delay, will induce a hardness of heart most unmanageable ; deleterious in its tendency, often conducting us to a most fearful state of delusion in judging of ourselves, and causing us to procrastinate until we die unsaved. Besides,—

3. There will always be some specious reason for putting off the unwelcome change, some difficulties in the way, family connexions, and what not. And,—

4. The conscience gets quieted by promises ; the devil will not tempt to renounce religion, but only to defer it ; and, perhaps, there is scarcely one damned soul, especially from christian countries, but what intended to be religious some time or other.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Since your great temptation is to defer, and that springs from your disinclination to religion, and that from your want of other and more correct views of it ; labour to get right views of it. Take not your ideas of its nature, tendency, etc., from its enemies ; nor, yet from the crude and indigested notions of it, which are held forth by its ill-informed friends ; but go to the word of God, and to its truest and best informed friends for your conceptions of it. Often meditate on these better and more interesting thoughts of it, and never fail to accompany your meditation with prayer to God, that you may be made partakers of feelings that shall accord with these more accurate and adequate notions of it, and so be roused to an immediate regard to the injunctions given you instantly to follow Christ.

2. If you experience any approach to these better feelings, give thanks to God, cherish a fear of weakening them at all, by any sinful or imprudent step, and cherish an expectation of their increase, which you

are warranted in doing, if you instantly and fully obey them.

3. Set no limit to your pursuit of this good, striving after more and more conformity to Christ, growing up into him your living Head in all things; so shall he delight in you, favour you, dwell with and in you, until he shall take you to dwell with himself in heaven forever.

SKETCH IX.

“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father?” etc. (Matt. xxi. 28—31.)

How strikingly did these sons resemble and set forth the conduct of mankind at large. The population of every succeeding age and generation of men have been acting the same parts over again. One part, by the spirit of inquiry it has cherished, by its care to shun all flagrant wickedness, and to cultivate decency of deportment, and especially by its apparent readiness to defend and reverence the counsels and dictates of God’s most holy word, has said, like the latter son, I go, sir, and yet has not gone. The other part of the world’s population has been perty and rebelliously saying to its divine Father, when commanded to go into his vineyard and labour, I will not, and yet has afterwards repented and gone: and this, in fact, is the very scene now passing in review before us.

1. The vineyard and kingdom denote the visible church, as may be seen in verses 41 and 43, for they may be taken from one who abuses them, and be given to another who will make a better use of them; but the invisible kingdom is never taken from one, in order to be given to another.

2. Here is a plain command given to enter the church. To whom is it given? In the case before us,

the head of the family had but two sons, and it was given to both. In this figure, then, we see that all the members of the human family have this command given to them. It is given to priests, and scribes, and moral persons; also to harlots, and publicans, and thieves; to persons of every variety of character. But mark,—

3. That no one is supposed to be the Lord's servant before he has entered the vineyard. One son said, "I go, sir, and went not;" he did not the will of his father; he was not a christian. The other son said to his father, when bidden of him to go into the vineyard, "I will not; but he afterward repented and went:" his repentance would have been utterly worthless, had he not gone into the vineyard and proceeded to labour. And let it be noticed,—

4. That men are required to enter the vineyard to work.

God has work for every one; he has called none into his church to live as drones.

And although he has many humble and unobtrusive christians in his church, yet, strictly speaking, no private ones.

We are not to enter the church for the alone purpose of getting good to our souls; for, if that were our only reason for entering it, then would our entrance be a question of mere expediency; but the command given us to enter the church is founded on a reason, and that reason is, that we have work to do.

We may further remark, that we are to work in the vineyard. It is not any work that we may choose to do out of it, that we are called to perform; but what he appoints us in it, that should first of all, and chiefly ever afterward, engage our attention and occupy our zeal. But let us notice,—

II. Our Saviour's awakening affirmation in the text, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God, before you." How is this? Is any encouragement given to iniquity in this kingdom? Oh, no, it can have no place in it.

How then can we account for it, that viler characters, nay, and the vilest, often enter the vineyard and the kingdom, before those of a more decent and moral cast. It is owing,—

1. To the circumstance, that sinful habits in the profligate, may not have the strength of those that lord it over the more decent and moral: for lesser sins in them may be much oftener indulged and practised. Besides,—

2. The profligate have not so much pride and shame to keep them out of the church; their reputation cannot suffer by the change. While,—

3. The profligate are much more liable to be alarmed. They cannot set the good against the bad, and so bolster up their hopes by balancing their accounts in their own favour. They cannot fear that they will not fare as well as others at the last. They know well what their portion will be. But,—

4. Let us not forget that profligacy is not necessarily cured by entrance into the vineyard; we may be members of the visible church, and remain unchanged; too many are so: (see next parable:) we must work, or we shall perish, though members of the church.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Let it not be overlooked, that the best cannot be saved out of the church, since none can be saved without the work which is to be done in ourselves, and for our fellow christians, and without submitting to christian discipline. And,—

2. Let not the worst of men despair or be discouraged, if made willing to return, and wishful to be saved; the church will not reject you, it has no right to do so; and God will not.

3. And does not the relation of father and son, give the father a right, and bring on him an obligation to direct and bring his son into the church, that he may be saved? And does not the same relation oblige the son to obey such direction, and submit to such influ-

ence, by entering the church, and seeking the great end of connexion with it?

4. Are we all connected with the visible church, and saved by that connexion?

SKETCH X.

“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.” (Heb. xiii. 9.)

WHAT, then, did the apostle think that christian professors were such airy nothings, as to be whirled and carried about with every breeze and breath of wind that blew? Alas! this was, and is, too much the case; for although there are a few whose researches after truth, whose attainments in the knowledge of it, and whose experience of its sanctifying power and satisfying tendency, have given to them a stability of character, humbly approaching to immutability; yet, we have the many, or at least too many, who resemble the reed shaken with the wind; if not the down, that the gentlest zephyr carries to and fro.

To such, the language of the text is applied with great propriety and force. “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines,” etc. Observe,—

1. Grace signifies favour; and as the gospel is the greatest favour God ever conferred on man, the blessings of the gospel are often called grace; and when these blessings have been received into the heart, and have produced a change of character, by the formation of pious and virtuous habits, the heart is said to be established with or in grace.

2. One of the greatest hindrances to this establishment of the heart is, the being carried about with divers and strange doctrines. This argues a fickleness of disposition; that there is a want of full conviction, a lack of evidence, or, the non-discernment of it: and so long as the disposition is unsettled, the taste for something new in religion will be dominant; just as some persons have a taste for a change of apparel, for

the putting off of old garments, and the putting on of new. The apology for this is,—

3. That it is extremely difficult to find out the truth, and that, therefore, we should exercise great mutual candour; as there are ninety and nine chances out of every hundred against our being right. This possibly may cure bigotry, but it can only produce virtue in fools. They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution; some filching their good name; others preying on their property; while some will not scruple to abridge their christian and civil liberty, and to shed their blood. But,—

4. The affirmation that there are ninety and nine chances out of every hundred against our being right, is not true. There are not one hundred different opinions upon one doctrine. There can be but three, on the doctrine of the trinity: Either, 1. That there are three substances; or, 2. That there are three persons in one substance; or, 3. That there is but one substance and one person. And let it not be forgotten, that charity may not unfrequently be found associated with a bigoted attachment to some truth.

You will perhaps be disposed to ask, but can we have full satisfaction as to the verity of christian doctrine? To this question, we may reply, yes; by bringing them to the test of experience, the same as in philosophy. As, for instance,—

1. The doctrine of depravity. I feel it in myself, and the scriptures ascribe it to all: here the two agree, and hence I cannot but infer that the doctrine is true. Again,—

2. The doctrine of justification. This must either be by works, or by a mixture of faith and works, or by faith only.

That justification cannot be by works, is evident from the consideration, that a breaker of law can never be accounted, by that law which requires perfect and uninterrupted obedience, as having always kept it, as that would be false; and how can such an one endure its penalty, and survive to keep it afterwards?

That it cannot be by a mixture of faith and works that we are justified, will be seen from hence, that he who is justified by faith and works, is justified by the law and by the gospel too; but, such is not the justification of the gospel. That declares, that he who is at all capable of attaining to justification on principles of law, is in no need of faith; and, on the contrary, he who is under any necessity of faith whatsoever, in order to his justification, can have no claim whatever to justification by works, or on principles of law; that these, in fact, are subversive of each other. The language which St. Paul employs, of election, we may, with equal propriety, employ of justification. (Rom. xi. 6.) And this very point the apostle has expressly asserted elsewhere. (See Romans v. 1, and Galatians v. 4, 5.)

Justification, therefore, under the gospel, is by faith only; and it is so that the promise of it might be sure to all who should be imitators of Abraham's faith, who is the father of the faithful.

And does not this account exactly agree with our experience? How did we attain it? By works, or faith? Not by works at all, but by faith only.

3. The doctrine of regeneration, or the renewal of our nature, may be tested in like manner. No man ever received it without prayer; and no sincere suppliant was ever refused it. And what is it that we ask and receive? We ask God's Holy Spirit, as it were, to new make, or make us over again; and we receive him liberally. Titus iii. 5, 6: And this renewing of the Holy Ghost is in knowledge, in righteousness, and true holiness, after the image of him who first created man in his own image, after his own likeness. Here, then, is experience corroborated by scripture.

4. The witness of the Spirit. The doctrine is, that the Spirit of Christ attests to our spirits, that we are the children of God. But how is this effected? By some vision? or, by some extraordinary revelation? or, by some external voice? No, he sends his Spirit into the hearts of his children; (Gal. iv. 6;) and he

produces in them a persuasion and conviction to this effect. But may we not be deceived? No; for with this persuasion or conviction of our sonship, spring up along with, and that are co-evil with it, the feelings of sons; love, joy, and peace, etc., which neither the devil nor any error can inspire.

5. The doctrine of entire sanctification. Perhaps you will tell me, that your feelings are against the doctrine; but can your feelings be a proper test of the verity of this doctrine? Do you pretend to have got as much religion as God either can or is willing to give to you and others? If not, your experience can be no test, nor can it be exhibited as a rare specimen of God's power and willingness to save.

If any have done and do now attain to such a degree of love as expels all tormenting fear of future condemnation, and makes them to be in this world as Christ their master was, while he was in it, then is this doctrine true, being accordant with experience and the word of God. Once more:—

6. There is the doctrine of Christ's divinity, a most important doctrine to you; but what proof have you of its verity? You pray that he may dwell in your heart, etc. You depend on his promise that he will come unto you, and manifest himself to you as he does not unto the world. You feel that "he liveth in you." You can "do all things through Christ who strengtheneth you;" and you have him in you "the hope of glory." Thus his dwelling in all his people at the same time, and the glory of his operation in them, show forth his infinity and majesty.

And as he, in whom any one divine attribute inheres, must, for the reason that he possesses one, possess them all; hence we find that our experience, and the statements of the word of God, perfectly accord on this all momentous doctrine.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Error in doctrine is, for the most part, owing to the indulgence of sin in the heart. "Men loved dark-

ness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”
 “If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”

2. And should you now be in any error, or in any doubt whether or not you are right, and wish to be guided assuredly into the right way, make your salvation from henceforth your principal concern, and you will soon get right, and be fully assured of that fact.

3. Hold fast what you have ; you have proved its heavenly origin : “Walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.” Neither receive nor listen to anything new, that is opposed to that which experience has demonstrated to be true.

4. To brethren and fellow-creatures in error, show all pity, and make efforts to rescue them ; but firmly, and with all christian temper, oppose their errors, and shun their society.

SKETCH XI.

“And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him : and tell me now what thou hast done ; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done : When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them ; and behold they are hid in the earth, in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.” (Josh. vii. 19—21.)

St. Paul said of the Israelites, “They are not all Israel that are of Israel.” That is, all are not true or genuine Israelites, that have descended from Israel : and to the truth of this remark we must all subscribe, as the passage which we have read as a text, furnishes a proof in point. Achan, the son of Carmi, was of the tribe of Judah, and therefore of Israel ; but he was not a genuine Israelite, one inheriting the noble qualities of Israel, when he wrestled with the angel of God and prevailed ; nay, so far was he from being a genuine

Israelite, that he was emphatically designated a troubler of Israel. (1 Chron. ii. 7.) And as such, Joshua addressed him, previous to his inflicting on him the penalty due to his sin. (See verse 25 of this chapter.) But,—

I. Wherein had he sinned? In reserving for himself that which God had most expressly condemned to destruction, as well as that which was sacredly claimed for Jehovah's treasury. (See Josh. vi. 18, 19.) Thus it appears that the inhabitants of Jericho, and their cattle, were first to be stoned to death, and then burnt, along with their garments, and whatever else they had, except their silver and gold, and their vessels of brass and iron, which were claimed for the Lord, and to be carried into his treasury. Now when the city of Jericho was taken, Achan cast his eye on a goodly Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, and took these for himself; thus robbing the Lord's treasury, and infracting his commandment. But,—

1. Wherefore was this city devoted to destruction? Because of its great wickedness. We do not mean to say that Jericho was more wicked than any other city in Canaan; but the inhabitants of Canaan generally were so idolatrous and abominably wicked, that the land is, by a strong figure of speech, said to have vomited out its inhabitants. (Lev. xviii. 23—25.)

2. But if Jericho's sin was not too severely visited, was not Achan's? What had his children done that they were to be stoned and burnt? We reply,—

(1.) It is not certain that they were stoned, etc. It is said that all Israel stoned him with stones. (Verse 25.)

(2.) It is also said that they raised over him a great heap of stones; not over them. It is said,—

(3.) That when they had stoned him with stones, that they burned them with fire. (Verse 25.) But this may be understood of the Babylonish garment, and of Achan's garments and stuff, that were burnt along with his own body. But if,—

(4.) Achan's children were stoned and burnt with

their father: it must have been from a participation in his guilt, knowing of the things concealed in the tent; on no other ground could they have suffered with their father, without a falsification of the word of God. (See Deut. xxiv. 16.)

3. Through this sin, the Israelites were worsted before the town of Ai, in their attempt to take it, and lost thirty-six of their men. (Chap. vi. 18.) And,—

(1.) It is no unusual thing for an army to suffer through the treachery of a general. While,—

(2.) It is not less true, that in part, mankind are responsible for one another. Observe,—

II. The steps by which Achan was led to the commission of his great offence.

When Joshua urged him to confess the whole truth, then Achan answered him and said: "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them, and behold they are hid in the earth, in the midst of my tent," etc. Here you see,—

1. That he was tempted through the medium of the eye; what an inlet has this been to evil! In the beginning it is said, that when the first human sinner saw that the "tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she plucked and partook of it." O this lust of the eye! Beware of it, all of you: let not any presume that they are out of the reach of danger: let all young persons especially be on their guard against its alluring and ensnaring tendencies. But the,—

2. Step in this downward course was, allowing himself to covet the forbidden objects: "I coveted them; when I saw, then I coveted them." Had he been of the psalmist's mind, wishful to escape every snare; and had he with him prayed, (see Psalm cxix. 37,) "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way," he had escaped this

snare of the devil. Had his heart been right with God, he would have looked on them as accursed, and would have loathed and detested them.

As he looked and gazed on them, it gave the adversary an opportunity of whispering in his ear, first, that these things were of great value. Probably this garment was the king's robe. And then there were the two hundred shekels of silver, which at least were worth £25. And then there was the wedge or ingot of gold, of fifty shekels weight, worth £113, making a total of £138, apart from the splendid garment. A great temptation this !

And then again it would be insinuated, that the garment would be useful, and why should it be burned ? and that the silver and gold, as they were claimed for the treasury should go in it, but be placed to his credit. And thus was he tempted to rob God.

And when his mind resolved on taking them, the step would be a short one to resolve on keeping them for his own use ; and should conscience twit him a little on the point, it would be suggested to him, that he was only taking it from him who was already rich, very rich, seeing his are the silver and the gold, and the cattle on a thousand hills. The,—

3. Step in this accelerated course was to conceal them. He could satisfy himself, but not others, that he might without any great impropriety, and that he ought to take them. But,—

4. That which gave him his greatest impetus in this headlong course ; he did not believe the threatening. God had indeed said, (see chap. vi. 17, 18,) " And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord : only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it." Had this threatening been believed and kept in mind, could he have acted as he did ? Impossible. Men

first call in question the truth of the menace, and then hope, that if any shall escape they shall. Observe,—

III. His confession.

It is the way of many, when they have transgressed, and have been suspected and arrested, flatly to deny it, and to stand to that denial, thinking hereby to induce a belief of their innocence; but such by this course greatly add to their sin, in that they not only sin against his law, but deny his omniscience.

So did not Achan; for when Joshua urged him, in a wise and feeling manner, to confess, he did it promptly and frankly.

Some would only confess to a priest; but Achan had not learned this dogma; nor were priestly men as yet daring enough to claim this.

Achan had troubled the camp, and it was but right that he should endeavour to remove the disgrace and trouble he had occasioned: after this manner should all who have scandalized the church do.

His confession could not avail to save his body; perhaps it did to save his soul.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Let us learn, with the utmost care, to guard our bodily senses, especially the eye and ear.

2. Let us pay particular attention to the state of the heart; covetousness is a dreadful sin; it leads us to rob both God and man.

3. You may conceal your sin for a time; but be sure it will, if persisted in, or if not repented of, forsaken, and pardoned, eventually find you out; therefore seek pardon and deliverance forthwith.

SKETCH XII.

“Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts. (Jer. ii. 19.)

BUT how is this knowledge to be come at? Rather, how can any avoid it? For if the word of God is at all perused, if the history of God's dealings with men is at all consulted, or, if we at all reflect on what is passing in review before us daily, or on what is daily taking place within us, we must have gathered, that it is an evil thing, and bitter, for any to have forsaken the Lord their God, etc. And that we, if we possess it not, may gain this knowledge; and, if already possessed of it, that we may see the thing more clearly and affectingly, let us,—

I. Consider the evil there is in sin.

1. There must be much evil in it, to produce such direful effects upon the body of man. “Death itself, and all the diseases that flesh is heir to, are the wages of sin.” That is to say, sin really and richly deserves to be visited with them all, and with ten thousand thousand more, were the thing possible, and that for ever and ever. I know that there are those professing christians, yea, and those christian divines, who deny this; but it is because there is a want of light in them.

2. There must be much evil in sin, to produce such an effect upon the soul, as to fit it for hell, the state and place prepared for the devil and his angels. Great must be the evil contained in their sin, to have rendered their case hopeless, because remediless; and dreadful must be the state and place that is prepared specially for them.

And yet into this state and place will all those be cast who have sinned against God, as an appropriate receptacle.

3. Sin is an extensive and an incalculable evil. It is an evil as widely diffused as God's creation. It has spread disorder throughout creation. It has poisoned

the air, cursed the earth, and perpetuated the effects of Adam's sin on all his posterity, and that to the end of time. To be convinced of this, let us,—

II. Notice the language of the text, that says, it is an evil and bitter thing. The people of Judah with their princes, had given place to great wickedness; had become but too much addicted to idolatrous practices; and, contrary to the cautions and prohibitions of the divine Being, had formed national alliances with the heathen nations round about them, particularly Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Syria, etc., instead of keeping themselves apart, and cleaving to God's worship and service, and relying on his protection alone for safety; this course subjected them to bitter disappointment, inasmuch as they neither found their allies able nor willing to protect them. And,—

1. Thus it is with sinners generally; it is but seldom, if ever it is so, that sinners receive from sin the satisfaction and enjoyment they expect, or even experience the exemption from its penalties they hoped for. Besides,—

2. Such departures from God, and such earthly and carnal dependencies ordinarily, if not always, arise from the tumultuous state of the passions and appetites of the sinner; a state invariably attended with much uneasiness and pain. And then,—

3. There is the bitterness of remorse which follows; for until the mind gets familiarized with sin, and the conscience becomes callous, if not seared, there will be remorse as far as there is any reflection. If sin was sweet in prospect, and during commission, it will be bitter in the review of it; but if it was at all bitter in commission, it will be as the gall and poison of asps in review. But,—

4. It will be followed by the bitterness of punishment, which will be the very essence or extract of bitterness. For then shall we see all the evil of its desert, its folly, its baseness, its rashness, its madness, its malignity, and its desert of punishment; and while we see, to feel ourselves inclosed by this bond, with

an ever enduring, and, therefore, with an ever to be endured punishment : oh, its bitterness ! . And that we may have such a view of sin as will save us from it, let us,—

III. Remark that sins committed immediately against God, are the worst of all. These are,—

1. A forsaking of him : a man had better forsake all other dependencies and good, than God ; for all who forsake him, will be forsaken of him. We may deceive ourselves by thinking that we will not allow ourselves to proceed to this length in sin, to forsake the Lord, and so to be forsaken of him : but no man can freely indulge in, and familiarize himself with sin, and continue an adherent to private, family, and public worship ; the relish for these will cease ; they will become irksome, distasteful, intolerable.

2. We shall cease to depend on and to seek protection from him, which is a farther forsaking of him. A sense of shame will make us unwilling to come ; a consciousness of our desert of abandonment will supplant all confidence ; and an anticipated rebuke, in case of application, will awaken and call forth alienated feelings, and those of enmity. Hence we shall seek help anywhere but in God. And therefore,—

3. We shall put away, or cast off, all fear of God. It is a sin for a saint to fear a helpless fellow mortal ; it is a greater sin for a sinner not to fear a sin avenging God.

It is a great sin never to have admitted the fear of God into the heart ; but it is a more provoking sin to cast it out, after it has been admitted. (2 Peter ii. 20, 21.)

And when this sin has been committed, what profaneness or sin is there which we are not prepared to commit ? But,—

After all, where is the greatness of the sin in forsaking the Lord, and in not having his fear in us ? Wherein ? Why,—

1. Because God has the first claim on us ; compared with his claims, no other being has any upon us. What

is it that we have not received from him, except our corruption and our sin? And what have we that we do not owe to him? Wherein is the greatness of the sin in forsaking the Lord, and being found without his fear? Why,—

2. In that contempt of God leads to every species of transgression and immorality. The fear of man will operate as a check but very partially; the fear of God, extensively and universally. He, therefore, who is void of this restraint, is prepared to prove the greatest scourge to his fellow citizens and subjects.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Let it never be forgotten that the duties of morality rest on those of piety; let no one, therefore, trust in morality, while it is alone: or not founded on and supported by piety.

2. Let it be the great business of life to cultivate religious principle; for so long as this is done, we are taking the most effectual measures to secure our personal, domestic, and national safety and happiness.

3. Let us labour to have it a settled principle with us, that the service of God is productive of the greatest happiness; then shall we adhere to and engage in it with unwearied assiduity.

SKETCH XIII.

“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.” (John iv. 39.)

It has been no new thing, for unbelieving men to traduce the character of our divine Redeemer, particularly on account of his condescension to some reputed to have been notoriously sinful. Thus the scribes and pharisees said of him, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them, because he went to be guest with a publican. And on a like account they

said, on another occasion, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners. In like manner, the infidels of our day have traduced him for associating with such women as Magdalene and the woman of Samaria. But it is enough to reply, that his converse with all such persons and cases, was always above suspicion.

In the present case, however we are by no means disposed to permit the tongue of slander to calumniate the character of this Samaritan woman with impunity. For,—

I. What right have we to brand her with the name of an adulteress ?

Is it said she had had five husbands ? She might, and yet be no adulteress.

Is it insinuated that some doubtless had divorced her ? That also is not improbable, and yet it would be no proof of adultery, as it was often done without any just cause. (See Matt. xix. 3.)

Besides, the crime of adultery was punishable by death, both according to Jewish and Samaritan law ; and consequently had she been guilty of it, she had been thus punished.

2. Do you say that the Saviour in fact accused her of this, saying, “ And he whom thou now hast is not thy husband : in that saidst thou truly,” I have no husband.

Bishop Pearce renders this, “ There is no husband whom thou now hast.” She possibly might be contracted in marriage, but not brought home as yet.

3. It is very likely that a woman who had been five times married was pretty well stricken in years, and would be very unlikely to be living in adultery with a sixth person. Even the passions of the most libidinous would be likely to be calmed and settled down under such circumstances. Besides,—

4. Our Lord never once reproached her with any such vicious and abominable conduct, which he surely would have done, had she been a loose and wanton woman. Certainly he would have set home

her guilt upon her conscience, and shown to her her imminent danger of an aggravated ruin or damnation, had he known her to be living in this sin. And,—

5. Had she been a woman of such infamous character, and known to be such, could she possibly have had any such influence with her neighbours as she is said to have had? “Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, he told me all that ever I did.” And when they had heard him for themselves, they said unto the woman, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

6. A notoriously bad woman, could not if she would, and would not, if she could, have turned to a point of such consequence as she did, as soon as she perceived she had a prophet to do with. Some may think it was her policy to shift the conversation from herself, and from the topic that could not but be painful to her; it may be so; it also shows that her mind had been turned to the topic which she introduced, or it had not occurred so readily and naturally. It ought to be known that there had been a temple erected on the mountain to which she referred, perhaps pointed, where the Samaritans had been wont to worship, instead of Jerusalem: and although the temple was now destroyed, thither the Samaritans still resorted for worship, as far as they had any inclination to worship. All this, of course, was condemned by the Jews. The woman seemed glad to have an opportunity of getting this point in dispute cleared up. Her motive for this we must leave.

7. If anything prejudicial to her character be inferred from the surprise of the disciples at his talking with her, for it is said, “They marvelled that he did so, (see verse 37,) it should be remembered that their surprise could not be on account of his talking with this particular woman, for she was to them an entire stranger, and, therefore, nothing evil could they know of her; but they marvelled at his having anything

whatever to do with her as a Samaritan, as the Jews had no dealings of any sort whatsoever with the Samaritans. (See verse 9.) This was matter of surprise to the woman herself, as the words themselves demonstrate. So that, from anything the narrative exhibits, the character of the woman appears unblemished. It may admit of a question how far she was prudent in having married so often. But observe,—

II. That her character may, in a good degree, be gathered from her testimony.

“Come,” said she, “see a man, which told me all things that ever I did : is not this the Christ ?” This saying is again repeated. (See verses 29 and 39.) It is not only evident that she must have had a more particular conversation with the Saviour himself, than what is recorded from verse 7 to the 26th of the narrative, but also with her townspeople ; which, in all likelihood, could not have been permitted, had her reputation been tainted with the stain of adultery.

Besides, had her character been infamous, as it needs must, if guilty of such an offence as she has been charged with, she would not have spoken so freely upon this point. And let it,—

2. Be noticed, that God blessed her testimony.

She wished her neighbours to share with her in the pleasure and benefit of hearing an extraordinary messenger and minister of God ; at least, a prophet ; and, as she thought and believed, the Messiah, for Christ had told her so. (Verse 26.) And hence her desire to avail herself of the benefit of having found him, and that her neighbours should do the same.

In this her conduct was praiseworthy, and God blessed it : “Many believed for the saying of the woman, and many more at her invitation went and heard for themselves and believed, and pressed him to tarry with them, which he did two days.”

And as she was made a blessing to the people in the report she gave of the Saviour’s dealings with her, and the invitation she gave them to accompany her, so

may we, and so shall we be blessed to others, if we have had previous intercourse with Christ, have had a discovery made to us of his saving ability, and have obtained an interest in him. Without this, though we should be the means of bringing others to Christ, we shall only serve as scaffolding to a building, which is taken down and thrown aside when the building is finished. But,—

3. Let us keep in mind how necessary it is that God's people should act as the woman of Samaria did, even in this country, enlightened and leavened as it is with religious principle: how many are there who attend no place of religious worship! Up and act for the Saviour's honour, and for the good of your fellow men.

SKETCH XIV.

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." (Psalm cvii. 23, 24.)

ALL men of sense and observation see the works of the Lord and his wonders; for where can a man go that these shall not be present with him, and arrest his attention?

It is however strikingly true of such as go down to the sea in ships, and do business in the great waters; these see more of the wonders of the Lord, and the magnificence of his works.

1. This is a sermon to sailors, and is therefore to be more particularly adapted to their circumstances. There is indeed but one way of salvation for all men. For as all are in the same circumstances of depravity, guilt, and helplessness, they must all repent, believe, and be made holy, or perish everlastingly.

And all who do repent, believe the gospel, and obey it, are entitled to the same privileges of pardon, purity, and heaven. But,—

2. A sermon to sailors should more especially contain advices, instructions, and admonitions adapted to

their peculiar condition. Some may be ready to censure us for having deferred this duty so long, and for not having prosecuted it with greater assiduity and effect: and in reply we have to say, we cannot justify our tardiness and apparent apathy. For,—

(1.) They have not the same public ordinances as others have; and therefore should have their attention directed as much as may be to what may supply their place, if this can be done.

As far as privacy can be had on shipboard, where so much is and must be done in the presence of others, it ought to be sought for the purpose of more seriously and solemnly endeavouring to direct our attention to the presence of God, and addressing ourselves to the perusal of his word and meditation on it; also for the purpose of examining our experience and practice by means of that word. And especially for the purpose of praying to God, and renewing our covenant with him.

(2.) Sailors should, in a particular manner, be urged to pay attention to the sabbath. Without this, for the lack of public ordinances, they will be in great danger of considering every day alike, and of allowing their minds to sink into a perfectly secular state; so that all business will become alike on that day, and the things of God have no more if so great a place on that day, as on any other, and so they will come to be lost sight of altogether.

All fishing on that day should be abstained from by our whalers and others, as there is a directing providence to supercede a practice so ungodly. (See John xxi. 1—13.)

And all other business on board a ship, that is not indispensably necessary to the safety of the ship, and the health of the ship's company, should be laid aside.

And public worship, whenever the weather and other circumstances will permit, should be observed aboard. A sermon or sermons should be read, and singing and prayer kept up, which would have a religious and animating tendency.

(3.) Sailors should especially remember the peculiar

advantages of their situation. They, above all others on earth, see the works and wonders of the Lord.

In our great towns we see the works and wonders of man; almost everything with which we have to do is man's production. There we generally stop. But if you inquire after the Maker of what you see, you are led to God.

Compare an artificial lake or canal with the sea; a picture of the sun or moon shining on the ocean, with the reality, how insignificant!

What we see of his works is on a small scale; you see them in all their magnificence and wonders; a river, compared with the sea; a rippling, compared with the mountain wave; a storm on land, compared with one at sea; a few small fry, compared with leviathan making the sea boil!

(4.) Sailors should always be reminded how particularly dependent they are on the providence of God. He it is who creates the fish and all creatures. (Psalm civ. 24, 25.) He directs their course. (See Luke v. 5, 6; John xxi. 3, 6; Hos. iv. 3.) He can destroy them. (Exod. vii. 18; Zeph. i. 3.)

(5.) Sailors should always be guarded against doing such things abroad as they would be ashamed to do at home; for if your character do not hereby suffer, as it possibly may not, because it is unknown, your soul will suffer, if you have any conscience left; and if not, you will be the more in danger of suffering the bitter pains of eternal death.

(6.) Sailors should also be put in remembrance how much the success of the gospel depends on their behaviour when in foreign countries. The specimens they give of christianity to the heathen. If you imitate the fishermen of Galilee, it shall be well; they preached christianity and exemplified it, and Christ honoured them. Remember you will have no excuse. But,—

(7.) Let all sailors, particularly all professing sailors, guard against all profane swearing, which is a shocking insult to God, and an insult offered to him without any provocation.

Carefully avoid all drunkenness, which places a man beneath the very brutes; they are guided by instinct; you have reason and grace to guide you. Remember it will beggar your family, lead to every other vice, and then to hell. And forget not to shun all impurity, which brutalizes the soul, extinguishes all virtuous love, destroys the peace of families, and proves indeed a damning sin.

(8.) Above all, let all sailors consider their dangers, and be prepared for death; this may come at any hour, and is always nigh in times of disease and danger, at the very door. "Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

SKETCH XV.

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephes. vi. 4.)

It is once and again said, in the New Testament, he that hath ears to hear, let him hear; and if, at any time, under any circumstances, these admonitory words demand attention, it surely would be with reference to the pious education of our children. We cannot prevent their being born in a state of corruption; but, I had almost said, we may prevent their living in it. At least we may do much by way of co-operation with God's grace in preventing our children, that they may have a good will, and then in assisting them when they have that good will; and as we may, so we ought to do thus much for the purpose of guiding the feet of our children into the good and right way at first. If any ask, what is to be done? let such attend to and follow the counsel given in the text. And,—

1. Provoke not your children to wrath; that is to say, do not exasperate them by severity. The heathens, both ancient and modern, exercise an absolute power over their offspring, and frequently destroy them; not that they have any right to do so.

The power which the Jews exercised over their

children was severe ; still, however, it was regulated by law. But,—

2. Christians who have the best instruction on the subject, and the best helps to the performance of the duty, are in no small danger of performing this duty with less effect than the Jews, if not of doing it more deleteriously than the heathen themselves.

We are required to bring them up in the nurture or discipline and instruction of the Lord.

I. They are to be brought up in the Lord.

Their bringing up must be with a view to make them genuine christians ; for the word Lord in the text means Christ.

1. Many parents say, we cannot make our children christians ; we cannot give them grace. True, you cannot. But you may and ought to train them as creatures that have immortal souls to save or lose ; a point which is but too commonly, nay, most awfully neglected.

Many, very many, parents are only concerned to get them food and clothing, and to place them in lucrative and honourable situations.

But O, remember they are immortal and accountable creatures, and are committed to you in trust. You, too, have teachers to help you : for you, therefore, there will be no excuse, if you live in the neglect of this trust.

2. But before any parent can bring up his children in the Lord, he himself must first be in the Lord. A large family is often urged in excuse of men's neglect of religion ; whereas, every child they have is an additional reason why they should be religious.

You are to impart to them the knowledge of God and themselves ; and are you untaught in these things yourselves ?

You are to teach them to pray ; and will you not pray yourselves, and in your families ?

You must go with them to the house of God in season, with reverence, and constancy.

If you are to bring them up in the Lord, you must

place them in the church, for how can you accomplish this unless you do? And how can you consistently place them in the church, while you yourselves make light of a place in it? Or, how can you manage to get them into the church, while yourselves are no members of it?

And could all this be accomplished by you without your having personal religion, yet remember, that a bad example on your part will spoil all, in that it would neutralize every previous step that you have taken. But,—

II. We are to bring up our children in the nurture or discipline of the Lord. *Paideia* means, to educate, instruct, discipline, or correct; and in this place, perhaps, more particularly includes the two latter significations.

(1.) Our children must be laid under restraint as to their evil propensities, as far as they may have been developed; without this, instruction will be useless.

(2.) Restraint, as far as any attempt is made to break through it, must be followed up by seasonable and suitable correction. Correction cannot be suitable if it be not seasonable; nor seasonable, that is not properly adapted to the case. Such correction as is rightly adapted to the circumstances will not have to be often repeated, if parents be but firm; for when children know they must obey, they will do it. But,—

Correction must never be given in, or regulated by, passion.

Nor must it be given at regular intervals. The excuse usually made is, we cannot be always beating them. No; nor is it necessary you should be; but, when it is necessary, it must be done.

(3.) As far as it is practicable, you must choose their companions for them, as they neither can have judgment nor experience to choose for themselves; and from the little sources of enjoyment they have in themselves, and from the preference which is given to society over books, they will seek and choose companions, and will be as and more likely to choose evil than good ones, unless their choice be rightly directed.

(4.) This bringing them up in the discipline of the Lord will take in the timely and appropriate rewarding of their obedience, by an approving smile, by commendation, by remuneration, etc. But,—

III. This bringing up of our children in the Lord, is the educating of them in his admonition.

Nouthesia means, such a regulation of the mind, by instruction, admonition, and reproof, as puts wisdom into it. Before, therefore, you can be capable of regulating the minds of your children, you must,—

(1.) Have studied the subject yourselves, and have required the art of regulating your own minds, as well as have gained religion, or you will never be able to put wisdom and goodness into the minds of your children.

(2.) Would you bring them up under the best regulations? You must then catechise them thoroughly in the knowledge of doctrines, duties, and a holy course of life; at the same time reminding them that he that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. And,—

(3.) Whoever would bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, must have the Lord's word read in his family judiciously, steadily, and devotionally.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. How delightful the sight, to see parents thus caring for their offspring and children, thus sweetening the evil of their parents by their docility and tractableness! And what a happiness is enjoyed in that family that is thus pious and orderly!

2. No reasonable hope of this enjoyment can be entertained where the heads of a family are not living in the Lord, or where the subordinate branches of it are disobedient and unteachable.

3. To parents endeavouring to bring up their children aright, there are many promises; to those who are acting a contrary part, there are many threatenings.

SKETCH XVI.

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." (Rom. xiii. 8.)

IN the preceding verse we are exhorted to render unto all their dues. And the apostle there particularizes the magistrate. This is of great moment, to show that christianity is entitled to the protection of government, in that it inculcates subjection and fidelity on all who embrace it, and that none will either be accounted or treated as christians, who do not obey its injunctions with respect to the powers that be.

Hence it enjoins a regard to the rights of our fellow subjects and neighbours; as,—

I. We are to be honest.

There is scarcely anything that is more talked about, or that is more praised; and yet what is there that is less practised? But he that will be honest must,—

1. Live within his income, be it much or little: he that spends more, cannot be honest.

Some imagine that appearances must be kept up, though the maintenance of them should carry us beyond our income, to inspire men with confidence in trading, and to give a man who may be in temporary difficulties an opportunity of rallying: but forget not that appearances must be honest.

2. We readily admit that persons in trade are obliged to run considerable risks; but it should be a principle laid down by them, and from which they ought never to depart, that they cannot honestly extend their risk beyond the means of covering it.

3. Those who live upon their weekly earnings should not go into debt at all, if by possibility it can be avoided; as sickness, or the want of employment, may make it exceedingly difficult to extricate themselves.

And the effects of running into debt are often ruinous to tradesmen who cannot get their own.

How much better to limit our expenditure in the quantity or the quality of our food and clothing, and to

have a little surplus, however trifling it may be, to carry to a savings' bank, than to restrict ourselves in nothing, and go beyond our means.

4. Those who would owe no man anything but love, must learn to be both industrious and economical. The husband and the wife must unite in this case; he must labour, and she must manage. Some talk of paying, if able, but they do not study how they may accomplish their object, or they do not try to do it, when they have devised the way.

5. If men are to be honest, and to owe no man anything but love, then masters must be humane.

They cannot always give high wages; but they should always pay the hire of their labourers in money. Those who do not, are face-grinders; and they will soon come into the hands of their master, the devil, who will grind their consciences on a wheel of fire.

6. And that the poor but honest, particularly the pious poor, may have it in their power, and be encouraged to regard this precept, owe no man anything but love, the wealthy should be charitable and help them, especially in all seasons of pressure and distress. But,—

II. Honesty is not all we owe to our fellow men.

We are to love one another; and this too is a debt which never can be fully paid.

1. This is the principle which originates all true honesty, and this alone can maintain it without any variation: "For love worketh no ill to our neighbour." It will not allow us to injure him either in his person, his property, his reputation, or in anything.

2. This is the principle that will not allow us knowingly to sin, either against God or man; on the contrary, it will prompt us to the discharge of every duty whereby we may please God, and promote the welfare of our fellow men; well therefore is it said to be the fulfilling of the law, as it respects our neighbour. (See verse 9.)

3. This love can only be had from heaven, or by the gift of the Holy Ghost to us, who is given to us as the

seal of our adoption, and who, by showing us the Father's love to us, and our advantage by it, kindles a correspondent feeling in our breast towards God, and all that are born of him. "He therefore that loveth is born of God and knoweth God."

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Let it be considered as a settled principle with us, that that honesty to men that springs not from love to our neighbour is not genuine, and will ultimately yield us no profit.

2. Let it be equally a settled principle with us, that that pretended love to our neighbour, which does not lead us to act honestly to him, is false, and will deceive us if depended on.

3. Nothing short of the love of God and our neighbour, springing from the operations of the divine Spirit in our hearts, and leading us to the observance of the law of love, can render us safe and happy now, and open the kingdom of heaven to us hereafter.

SKETCH XVII.

"And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day, that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And the pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him." (Mark iii. 1—6.)

In this narrative we have a striking contrast between the subtlety and deep rooted malice of the pharisees, and the ingenuousness and benevolence of Christ. He is here said to have entered again into the synagogue. What synagogue it was does not appear, but some one in Galilee; there he found a

man with a withered and contracted hand, on whom he had compassion : but as it was the sabbath, and as he knew that the pharisees were watching him, to see if he would heal him, that they might have whereof to accuse him, he commanded the cripple to stand forth ; and then demanded if it was lawful to do good on the sabbath day, or to do evil ; to save life, or to destroy it ; but they stubbornly held their peace, rather than commit themselves. At this mark of their wickedness he was grieved and angry ; nevertheless he did not refrain from doing the good, because of their superfluity of naughtiness. For he said unto the man, stretch forth thine hand ; and he stretched it out, and his hand was restored whole as the other. Thus we see,—

I. That works of mercy and necessity may be done on the sabbath day.

In the case before us, it was not the performance of any manual operation that gave these fastidious hypocrites such huge offence, but the speaking of a word ; it was saying to the man, stand forth, and then adding, stretch forth thine hand, and with the effort communicating a power.

And yet, had it been the performance of a work of necessity, where had been the sin, or even the impropriety of the thing ? If the temple of God had been on fire, or any of their own dwellings, would any of these hypocrites have thought it wrong, or, in the least improper, to endeavour to extinguish the fire ? Or, if an ox or an ass belonging to any of them had fallen into a pit, or into a ditch, would they have thought it sinful to go and lift it out ? Not they ; and had they been unable to do it themselves, they would have thought him very unnecessarily strict, not to say cruel and unneighbourly, who would not have lent his assistance.

And if such works were justifiable, and even commendable, in their estimation, how much more justifiable and commendable ought they to have accounted acts of mercy and charity to men ! Was not this most evidently an act of mercy to this man ?

And let it be remarked, that our Lord neither sought nor received any recompence from men, for any of his works of mercy to them at any time, much less for any he performed on the sabbath day; he was not as our physicians, who, not only allow themselves to be remunerated for their necessary and merciful visits and efforts on the day of the Lord, but demand it. As to our bakers, they are neither to be remunerated nor justified, in what they do on the sabbath day, though it be professedly to accommodate others.

And even any merciful or charitable works, that may as well be done on another day as on the sabbath day, ought to be done on other days, and not on this. But observe,—

II. The temper of Christ in performing this act of mercy.

1. He looked round about on them with anger. Anger is a dangerous passion, if unqualified, as it but too often is in men; but in Jesus never.

Here it was qualified by grief. Anger, like many dangerous medicines, as arsenic and mercury, which destroy when administered in large quantities, and do no good when used in small quantities, unless they be mixed, must be qualified, or it would be deleterious in its effects. But what reason had he for indulging either in anger or grief?

2. He was angry because of their satanic opposition to a work truly good. Had it been an evil work they so strenuously opposed, or a work of a doubtful character, or a work good in its manner, but wrong in its motive, why, then, there had been some show of reason for their opposition; but to oppose an act right in manner and motive, an act unquestionably good, nay, an act of the greatest mercy and benevolence, showed a baseness and wickedness of a most provoking nature, to a being of perfect purity, tenderness, and love. But then,—

3. This indignant feeling was mixed up with grief. He looked round on them, the hypocritical pharisees, with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their

hearts. With a view to justify himself in showing mercy to this son of affliction on the sabbath day ; with a view too of flashing conviction into their minds, strong as their prejudices were, that the views they took on this subject were unsound and sinful ; above all, with a view to detect and expose the malevolent spirit under which they went into the synagogue and remained there ; (see verse 2 ;) he said to them, when the man with the withered hand stood forth, " Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath day, or to do evil ? to save life or to kill ? " Instead of opening their eyes honestly on the truth, and ingenuously retracting their errors, they craftily and wickedly held their peace." Well might the Saviour grieve over their awful state, and well might he compassionate the case of the poor cripple. Observe,—

III. The inveteracy of prejudice.

1. These whited walls watched him, that they might accuse him.

If I suspect any one is about to do evil, I ought to watch, with a view to warn and save him.

Yea, and I may watch or observe a man that I may know how he acts, with a view more closely to copy his good example.

But to watch any man, who is good, and who is wholly occupied in doing good, that I may find occasion for setting him forth as one who is evil, and who is doing evil, is indeed closely to imitate the grand accuser of the brethren.

2. These pharisees were more disposed to accuse of evil, than to try to prevent it, and that through the inveteracy of their prejudice against the Saviour. Christ gave them a fair opportunity of debating the point with him, whether works of necessity and mercy can be innocently done on the sabbath day or not ; but they carefully avoided all discussion of this matter, being wishful rather to detect him in doing evil, than to prevent him doing it. O what malignancy !

3. This truly merciful miracle, that would have softened any but the most deeply prejudiced and

obdurate, only hardened them the more. (Verse 6.) So conversions harden many : there is something in the manner which offends. This man was cured on the sabbath ; they are converted in a conventicle ; by an unauthorised man, amidst noise. So it seems better that they should swear, than pray ; be drunk, than sober ; filthy, than chaste. Or, rather, that they should remain unconverted and abominable in word and deed, than be converted out of a church, by a man not in the apostolical succession, and in a revival meeting. So much for prejudice. Observe,—

IV. The conduct of the man with the withered hand.

1. He was in the way of duty. This was the sabbath day, and where was he ? Not in bed, taking medicine, to save time. Not in his business ; not taking his journey of pleasure ; not paying his visit to his friend, whom he cannot spare time to see on another day ; not lounging away his time in his own dwelling, or in the fields, or in the public house. No ; he is found in the synagogue, associated with the worshippers of God, and worshipping God most probably.

2. He must stand forth, if he would have the cure ; he must not be reluctant to have his helpless and necessitous condition made fully evident to himself and others, nor be ashamed to acknowledge his obligation to Christ for his cure, and that too in the very face of Christ's enemies.

3. He was commanded to do what he had no natural ability to do, to stretch out his withered arm. He might have said, how can I ? Why command such a thing ? But he thought it his duty to attempt what was commanded him, relying on the wisdom, goodness, and ability of the person commanding, to give power for the occasion and purpose ; and it was so. And are not we commanded to break off our iniquity, to humble ourselves before God, to repent, amend our ways, and believe ? Assuredly ; and with the attempt to obey, we shall find the power. All this is evident.

4. For he had faith in the power of Christ, and may not we ? Let us then come with our withered hand,

with our bodily ailments, but especially with our spiritual; assured that as he has commanded us to stand forth, and to place ourselves in posture for a cure, so he will now do for us whatever is necessary, to render our salvation and happiness complete.

SKETCH XVIII.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Rom. viii. 28.)

AND is this then a thing known to all? No; it is not a thing believed by all; and, therefore, it cannot be known to all; and even to some, who in a sense believe this, it sometimes seems to want a farther degree of experience to render faith triumphant.

If, however, past experience be consulted, or the declarations and promises of the divine word be received, we shall be in no doubt on this interesting point of doctrine. For here we have,—

I. A glorious declaration made. “And we know that all things work together for good.”

II. The persons interested in it specified, “Them that love God,” to them who are the called, according to his purpose.

I. A glorious declaration is here made, “All things work for good.”

1. Sometimes by good, we mean agreeable; but it is not true that all things contribute to produce an agreeable state of things.

2. And sometimes by good, we mean outward or temporal advantage; but all things do not always work this; and, perhaps, but seldom. But,—

3. That good to which all things are here said to be subservient, is moral, religious, and eternal; and to this, all things, all events, pleasant and painful; all circumstances, toward and untoward; all beings, good and bad, contribute either directly or indirectly, that is, either freely or by control.

Nothing can happen to a saint, but what he may turn to his spiritual advantage. And all things work together to produce one result; just as the wheels of a complex piece of machinery, which turn contrary ways, are all necessary to the completion of the article. But,—

4. It is not to be supposed that any event or circumstance, or that any being, irrational or rational, bad or good, will thus contribute to the good of another, except as he is moved to it, or ordained, of the Lord. Nor will all things thus contribute to our good,—

5. Without our own obedient and believing co-operation. But, whom are we required to obey? God, who is thus constantly seeking our good. And with whom or what are we to co-operate? With God, in his design, and with his instruments or agents in their natural or over-ruled tendencies. For,—

II. It is only to the persons specified in the text, that the declaration is made, “All things work together,” etc., “to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Here then we see,—

1. That the advantage to which the text refers, is restricted to those who love God.

There is no such advantage to those who hate God.

Nor yet to any who love him not, whatever other accomplishments they may have. “He is Head over all things to his church.” (Ephes. i. 22.)

And his church finds all things in him. “All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas,” etc. (1 Cor. iii. 21.) It is,—

2. Restricted to, such as are “the called, according to his purpose.” This mode of expression is exegetical; these phrases (them that love God,—to them who are the called according to his purpose) being explanatory of each other.

The called, mean those that are invited, as to a feast. See Clarke’s note on the place. The called, according to his purpose, is explained in the following verses,

where we learn that the arrangements of grace are fixed, and cannot be defeated by man. (Verse 31.)
 "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

IMPROVEMENT.

1. These saints were suffering. Their sufferings, therefore, were among the all things that were then working for their good; they do still, through the same superintendency.

2. Do you love God? Have you been called? Have you obeyed the call? If so, you have received the Spirit of God, who has shed abroad in your hearts the love of God: in which case, it is expressly declared that all things are made subservient to your benefit; believe it, and take the comfort of it, trusting in your God.

3. If God will work things in this way, then none can be excused who neglect religion, either from a fear of persecution or anything else, for all things thus work for our good.

4. This is no fiction; no mere creature of the imagination: "We know that all things work," etc. Some things we cannot know if we would; some things we might know that we do not. But how can any good people be ignorant of this, if they consult the history of past ages, or their own, of other persons, or their own; especially, if they consult the word of God.

SKETCH XIX.

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." (Isaiah liii. 10.)

If apparently great means produce great ends, there is a proportion; and the result may be calculated without the spirit of prophecy. But the contrary is the case of Christ. (See verses 2 and 3.) Yet, after this apparently insignificant man is dead and buried, and

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out of the way, out of sight and out of mind, "he shall see his seed, prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." This could not be true of two men.

The prediction, it is true, looks very much like history; but as it was in the keeping of Christ's enemies until its accomplishment, this circumstance raises it above the cavils of unbelievers. In considering this scripture, let us,—

I. Look at the innocence of the victim. "He had done no violence; neither was any deceit in his mouth."

(1.) He had done no violence; he had violated no law, either of man or of God; nor had there ever been anything contrary to the law of love and kindness either in his life, upon his tongue, or in his heart. Nor,—

(2.) Was there any deceit in his mouth, not the least guile, nor the least semblance of fraud; nor any thing but truth, sincerity, and genuine simplicity. Yet,—

(3.) It pleased the Lord to bruise him and to put him to grief: but how are these expressions to be understood? Did the Lord bruise him permissively or actively? In verse 6, the Lord is said to have laid on him the iniquity of us all. In verse 8, he is said to have been stricken for the transgression of his people. And to the same purpose it is said, that he was a sin offering, and bore our sins.

His sufferings, therefore, must have been vicarious, that is, endured on the behalf of others; as he himself had done no violence, and therefore deserved not to suffer.

It was what the Lord was pleased to lay upon him that caused the extremity of his pain. Independent of this, many have suffered as much as he did, and with as much, if not with more, fortitude than he did. But,—

(4.) It was his *naphsho*, his soul, his life or blood, that was made an offering for sin. (Lev. xvii. 11.)

Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. (Verses 11, 12.) He poured out his soul unto death, and that not only in pity to the world, but out of love and in obedience to his divine Father. Hence,—

II. His glorious recompence.

“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong.” This dividing him a portion with the great, says Dr. Wm. Louth, may be more exactly rendered with the Hebrew, “I will bestow many upon him;” or, “I will give him his share or possession of many.” Thus the expression is equivalent to that of Psalm ii. 1, “I will give him the heathen to his inheritance,” etc.; and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, alluding to the custom of conquerors dividing the fruits of their conquests with their officers and soldiers. There is, however, another turn given to the words, “He shall divide the spoils of the strong,” turning out satan out of the kingdom he hath usurped; and to this sense Christ may possibly allude, when he saith, “When a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour, wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.”

But as the particulars of the Saviour’s recompence are specified in the text, let us glance at them.

(1.) “He shall see his seed.” Both in the vegetable and the animal kingdom too, the seed is of the same nature and kind with that which propagated it. So is it spiritually. A seed of evil doers, are the offspring of the devil. The righteous seed proceed from the Lord, from his atonement, our life from his death. “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed,” that is, springing from it. Just as in the vegetable kingdom, one seed springs from the disorganization of another.

This is not after the Socinian scheme: “The blood of Christ, not that of the martyrs, is the seed of the church.”

(2.) His seed shall prolong his days. This was an hazardous prediction! Who could have ventured to

assert it without the spirit of prophecy? A whole nation is against an unprotected individual; and yet he braves and beats them all. The world itself cannot produce another such example. His seed has prolonged his days until now; and, if through eighteen centuries, what is to prevent its continuance to the end of time?

(3.) "And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

The pleasure of the Lord, according to bishop Louth, is the gracious purpose of God to justify many. Many shall seek to be justified by him, and shall be so. He shall raise up, and send forth his servants into the world, and his cause shall prosper. Christianity shall progressively increase. And even kings and nations shall become subject to him. How improbable would all this appear when first foretold; nay, how improbable would it appear at the commencement of christianity! And yet, what has there of this glorious prediction that has failed? Christianity has conquered the civilized world.

And this pleasure of the Lord is still in his hands, He superintends it. The government is still upon his shoulder. What then can baffle his design, or annul his plans?

IMPROVEMENT.

Since he was bruised, and made an offering for the sins of others, that transgression might be finished or ended, and the reign of righteousness brought in, let us see to it that this great end is attained in us.

And since the death of Christ was to produce a seed, let us endeavour to make known his death to the ends of the earth, and the design of it, that a glorious seed may spring from it.

SKETCH XX.

“For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.” (Psalm lxxviii. 5—7.)

HERE we see the great end Jehovah had in bestowing his law and testimony on his intelligent creatures; it was to induce them to set their hope in God, and not forget his works, but keep his commandments. One would have thought that when man had forgotten God’s works, and had ceased to obey his commandments, having placed his hope elsewhere than in his Maker, he would have left him to wander on and perish: but O, the kindness of God then to think of and pity him; and not only so, but to give him his testimony and his law; nay, to establish these in Jacob and Israel. Observe,—

I. The testimony spoken of respects the works of God. (Verse 7.) As,—

(I.) The works of creation.

Many of the ancients, and not a few of the moderns, have spoken of the world as having always been as it now is; with all possible gravity, and with all authority, they talk of the eternity of the world and of matter, as though it were a point most perfectly canvassed and established.

Others there are who think that matter is eternal, but not creation; but these do not ascribe creation to any wise and intelligent cause, but to a fortuitous course of atoms.

But the testimony of Jehovah informs us, that “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen. i. 1.)

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” That “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” That the

same was in the beginning with God. That all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. (John i. 1—3.)

(2.) Jehovah's testimony refers to his works of providence.

Many of the wisest among the heathen, who professed to admit of a creation, supposed all things when created left to the control of chance, or of fate, or of inferior agents.

And not a few, in their extreme ignorance and sottishness, have gone the length to suppose, that all things in this lower world, (and of any other world, they have the most crude of any notions at all,) are left to the management of a diabolical agency.

But the testimony of the Most High assures us, not only that all things were created by him (that is, by the Word, the Son of God) that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; and that all things were created by him and for him; but, it also assures us, that he is before all things, and that by him all things consist. (Col. i. 16, 17.)

Again, this testimony tells us, that he upholds all things by the word of his power; (Hebrews i. 3;) and that his kingdom ruleth over all. (Psalm ciii. 19.)

In agreement with this view of things it states, that, "The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that are bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." (Psalm cxlv. 14—17.)

(3.) The testimony of Jehovah refers to his work of redemption.

There have always been some, who have denied that human nature required any mending.

But what has ever been the state of those who have held this doctrine? Or, even of those, who while they admitted that man needed amendment, were left

most to their own resources? O, how depraved, and dark, and wretched!

To advert to the language of inspiration, it was time for the Lord to work. And,—

His testimony, in a special manner, referred to the means employed by him in effecting man's redemption; such as sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, hereby harmonizing the divine attributes. His sending the Holy Spirit to open man's eyes, and to prepare his heart as the temple of God; and, in short, his marvellous loving kindness in the instrumentalities and agencies employed in carrying his redeeming purposes fully into effect.

This testimony he hath,—

II. Established.

1. He established it by the miracles he wrought from the time he began to deliver this testimony, up to the time of its completion; hereby confirming their mission, who were, from age to age, employed in its delivery.

2. He established it by the prophecies or predictions, which he empowered them to utter; things which no creature could know, except as it was given him of God, because stretching far into the future, and therefore, known to God only. This kind of evidence is better calculated to make a permanent impression on the mind; for, while the evidence of miracles seems to be better calculated to make an immediate impression, and to wax more and more feeble, the farther off we are removed from the time of their performance; the evidence of prophecy, on the contrary, the farther off is the period of its accomplishment removed from the time of its delivery, and with the greater force does its authority strike the mind.

3. The testimony is established by the harmony or agreement of its several parts, taking in much of what is called the external and internal evidences of revelation.

4. This testimony is established by its agreement with human reason, when enlightened and purified.

5. It is confirmed by the experience we have in the economy of providence and redemption. Observe,—

III. That on the ground of this testimony he established a law.

This law he commanded our fathers, that they should make known unto their children, and they again unto their children. (See text.)

1. This testimony and law then should be made known unto our children, and commanded them.

Some say that children have nothing to do with them; and they, therefore, are for banishing the Bible from our schools.

Others are of opinion that our children need to be taught nothing more than the ten commandments.

While a few others think that children are incapable of understanding the testimony and law.

But such, assuredly, are not the thoughts of Almighty God. (See text.)

2. This is the way in which religion is to be perpetuated.

He established a testimony, and appointed a law, that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, in a descending series, "Who should arise and declare them unto their children." Thus millions may be the result of one conversion.

3. This testimony was established, and this law appointed, that men might be brought to set their hope in God, making him their refuge, and fleeing to him under all the ills, temptations, and troubles of life.

And he more especially intended them to make him their hope, with respect to their being prepared for, and kept unto, eternal life.

4. He established his testimony, and appointed his law, "that men should not forget his works."

And if we be taught his testimony and law in childhood, we shall not forget his works, as early impressions are often deepest and most lasting.

5. He established his testimony, and appointed his law, that men, instead of forgetting his works, should

be led to keep his commandments. This is the grand practical result.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. How far has the meaning of his testimony and law entered into our souls? and how far have we entered into the spirit and intention of his testimony and law? Is our hope set in God? Are we keeping his commandments? If not, what is our religion? and what are our prospects?

2. Are we teaching this testimony and law to our children, and the children of our schools? If not, whatever we are doing for them besides, we are neglecting the most important of their interests, and are far from acting the part of true friends to them.

SKETCH XXI.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John iii. 2, 3.)

To worldly people generally, ay, and to many who profess religion too, it appears highly presumptuous in any confidently to claim the relation of sons and daughters to the Lord; and they have no patience with those who do this. Presumptuous beings, say they, dare you call yourselves sons of God? We dare; and have divine authority for what we do; for, saith the text, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," even now, with all our infirmities about us. "And it doth not appear what we shall be," etc. Let us notice,—

I. What we are.

II. What we shall be; and,—

III. The improvement to be made of our privileged state. "Every one that hath this hope in him," etc.

I. We have to notice what we are, "Sons of God."

All who are sons of God have become such by

regeneration, as the last verse of the preceding chapter shows. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him. Our nature, as it cometh into the world, is totally depraved ; and hence we must undergo a new or second birth, before we can be accounted as children of God, as without that we have no affinity of nature.

2. When made partakers of a new and divine nature, we are treated as children of God ; we are treated as beloved persons, in an exalted sense. (See verses 1—3.) We are provided for, protected, corrected. How astonishing ! that we who were children of wrath should be thus dealt with : had we been placed in the relation, and treated as servants, it had been a great privilege. But to have had our liability to wrath reversed, and the relation of sons conferred on us, is most amazing love ! But,—

3. As sons, we have the spirit of adoption given to us, and this infuses into and calls forth in us a filial or child-like disposition. “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Those who deny the witness of the Spirit, invert this order ; but of course without any warrant from God.

And being made the sons of God, observe,—

II. What we shall be.

1. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. There is nothing in the revelation of God, that fully shows us what we shall be hereafter ; it is but little that we know of futurity. We see nothing of that after state as yet, our vision not being adapted to it.

We walk, at present, by the faith of that world, not by the sight of it. (2 Cor. v. 7.)

We are full of curiosity on this subject, and would vastly like to know ; but we must wait until the period for the development of the matter shall arrive. But,—

2. This the gospel does reveal, that we shall be like him.

Like him ! Whom ? The Lord, Christ, for it is of him that the apostle is speaking. He hath appeared

once, and will appear to men again ; but the Father is the invisible God, whom no man hath seen, or can see.

Like the Lord, Christ, we shall be, not in equality, but similarity.

Like him in the holiness and perfection of our souls.

Like him in the spirituality, immortality, activity, and glory of our bodies. (Philip. iii. 21.)

Like him in the felicity of our being, seeing we shall enter into his joy.

Of all this we are assured, as we shall,—

3. See him as he is. “ Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.” When christians depart this life, therefore, it is that they may be with Christ ; and being with him, and privileged to behold his glory, they of course see him as he is. This implies, that in that state they have a perfect knowledge of him. We see numbers of people, but not as they really are.

And as they shall see him as he is, this is the proof that they shall be like him, “ Because none but the pure in heart shall see God.” Seeing him forever, will make that likeness permanent ; will forever preserve from apostacy ; and will have an attracting and transforming power forever. Hence,—

III. Our great concern should be rightly and carefully to improve this privileged state.

1. This hope of seeing Christ as he is, and, consequently, being like him, should promote our purity ; hence, if we are not cultivating purity, we have not the hope here spoken of ; ours is the hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish.

2. This sentiment applies to every man ; there is no exception.

3. Every one that hath this hope purifieth himself.

It is only by the grace of God that any man would be inclined or able to purify himself ; yet, still this grace does not operate on men mechanically, it must be used by us.

And all who are intent on being pure will,—

4. Aim at nothing less than being pure, “even as he is pure.” The holiness of Christ is the mark they aim at, and with nothing less can they be satisfied.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Is the honour of being sons of God designed only for a few, or for all who will accept it on the terms set forth in the gospel of God? If for all, then let all aspire unto it. Men aspire unto great worldly alliances; but what are any of them, or all of them put together, compared with this?

2. But remember, none can become sons of God, but on principles of grace; at once, therefore, renounce every other method of seeking to become sons of God, and in this way seek to be made sons of God without delay, as the day of opportunity is greatly narrowed, and rapidly coming to its close. And,—

3. Settle it in your hearts that the best practical proof we can have of our being the sons of God now, and of our being entitled to look for a more exalted state of being and bliss is, our waiting for the Son of God from heaven, and our increasing efforts to be pure, as he is pure, so that we may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.

SKETCH XXII.

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (James i. 27.)

OBSERVE, this is not the nature of pure religion, but the effect of it. Were it otherwise,—

The visitors only, and not the visited, could have pure and undefiled religion.

“This is the love of God,” that is, the effect of the love of God, “that we keep his commandments.”

Here let it be observed,—

I. That pure and undefiled religion in its nature, is the love of God and man.

The grand deceiver of mankind has always been desirous to lead men to place religion in something else than love to God and man, and, for the most part, in that which calls for the fewest sacrifices, and will comport with the greatest degree of self indulgence. Thus, with some, it is liberality of sentiment; with others, orthodoxy; with some, benevolence; with others, an attendance on some place of worship; with some, the receiving of the sacrament; and with others, paying every one his own; with some it is knowledge of God and divine things; with others, the form of godliness. And thus it is that pure religion is put out of sight by its visor.

Let us not forget, however, that none of these things separately, nor all of them together, make up our notion of religion. That is, love to God and man, springing from the apprehension and full conviction of his love to us, which awakens and kindles in us a corresponding feeling to God and our fellow creatures. But,—

2. Pure religion and undefiled, is not adulterated by any corrupt mixtures. It is to have the heart filled with love to God and man, or to love God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind, and with all the strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. This is to have the love of God perfected in us.

3. It is the way of but too many, to mix up such things with religion, as greatly enfeeble and deflower, though they do not totally destroy it. Their principles and doctrines are like the clare-obscure, in colouring; with their feeling and expression they mix up much that is wild, finical, and eccentric; and to their genuine proofs of obedience, they append much that is purely adventitious, if it be not wholly imaginative.

Indeed, on this very point, the nature of pure and undefiled religion, there is much, very much, of delusion abroad, at this very moment. You shall not unfrequently hear it said by persons, "I would not part with my religion for a thousand worlds." But what

have they to part with? Were they ever converted to God? Have they ever regained his favour and image? What of his mind do they express? What of his example do they imitate and copy? They would not part with their religion! but the fact is, they have none to part with; for their religion does not lead them, after the example of their Master, to go about doing good. No; nor does it lead them, after the example of the first christians, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world, which is the,—

II. Great point unto which the words of the text direct us.

The first effect of religion noticed here, is this, “To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.” Religion disposes the mind to every good work. For the genuine follower of the Redeemer, is not only thoroughly furnished unto all good works, but is required to be ready to do them. (Titus iii. 1.)

Many of the particular effects of pure religion, depend much upon the ability which the christian has for doing good, and the opportunity he has for putting it forth. Wherever ability and opportunity meet together, there it is necessary that the christian show his readiness to do good. For “whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” Besides,—

2. This benevolence of disposition, prompting us to good, as we have ability and opportunity, to all, is not only one of the prime excellencies of our holy religion, but one of its distinguishing peculiarities.

In what age or state do we find heathenism producing any effects of this kind?

And to what, but pure religion, are we to attribute the establishment and success of all our humane and charitable institutions?

It is this, especially, which leads the saints to weep with such as do weep, and to visit the fatherless and widows, to console them, to succour, and to defend them.

And, if it will lead us to act thus at any time, it will surely prompt us to do it in the time of their affliction, when they are most in need of help. But,—

3. Another effect of pure religion is, it prompts the subject to keep himself unspotted from the world ; for at the time it invites to the practice of benevolence, it restrains from vice.

Many attempt to disjoin the two ; with these, benevolence is everything. They forget what St. Paul hath said : “ Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” These persons will give the proceeds of a music festival, of a ball, of a play, nay, and of more inglorious things, and then think they have covered all their own sins, and recommended themselves to the divine favour, by their charitable procedure.

But guard against this delusion of the devil ; for be assured it is as uniform an effect of pure religion and undefiled, to keep us unspotted from the world, as to make us benevolent. Its injunctions always and every where are, “ Touch not, taste not, handle not.”

We are not to inquire how near we can come to the world, without evil ; but, how far we can keep from it, while we are doing our duty in and to it. Our wisdom and interest are continually crying to us, “ Shun the appearance of evil.”

IMPROVEMENT.

What of this pure religion have we ? For whatever of religion we have beside, if we have not this, we have no religion that can either save or profit us.

And rest assured, that nothing but pure and undefiled religion, will make us a blessing to the children of affliction and the world.

And whether we have those qualifications and qualities which will recommend us to the consideration and esteem of our fellow men, or not, if we have but pure and undefiled religion, and as good a share of it as we may have, we shall be highly acceptable to God,

and hear him say to us at last, "Come ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," etc.

SKETCH XXIII.

"Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephes. ii. 9, 10.)

THE subject of discourse here is, how we are saved. (See verse 8th.) It must be either by faith or works, there being no middle course; the apostle declares it is not of works, lest any man should boast. Man, being filled with false and inflated views of himself, is ever prone to boast, and that oftentimes when he has the least right or reason so to do. Nay, and he is not unfrequently inclined to boast when he has no reason whatsoever to do it. It is by faith that we are saved, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works. But how is the apostle to be understood? Is it so by faith, as that works, even the very best of works, would spoil or hinder it? Surely not; so far from it, that as we have,—

I. To observe, no christian can get to heaven without them, whatever we may have to say about them, or whatever place we may assign them in the business of our salvation.

God hath ordained (that is, prepared) us to walk in them. Because he has commanded us to do so, and has decreed that those who do not, shall not see the kingdom of God.

This arrangement is co-eval with, if not anterior to, the publication of the gospel.

And while this process commences here, it will stretch into the future, and into eternity itself. For if men are to be raised from the dead, it is that they that have done good may have everlasting life, and they that have done evil, may undergo the sentence of eter-

nal damnation. "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Can any be in doubt whether or not this holy course embraces the present and future, the temporal and the eternal condition of the saints? Ponder then the following statement:—

"Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you." How? "By turning away every one of you, from his iniquities." "Who," that, is Jesus, "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "And this I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men." "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope." Hope of what? Of his glorious appearing. What to do? To complete the redemption and bliss of his people. In short, as a father exhorteth his children, whom he tenderly loves, to demean in character, so doth the apostle exhort the disciples of the Saviour to walk worthy of Jehovah, who hath called them unto his kingdom and glory. And how is that? By thinking on and pursuing whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, and whatsoever is most virtuous and praiseworthy.

Thus you see that whether we have believed, been redeemed, or blessed of the Lord Jesus, the end of all is, that we may be pre-eminent in holiness here, and in happiness forever. But observe,—

II. After what manner we are brought to practise good works, to the exclusion of boasting.

Such works as are here referred to, no man does by nature; none being good by nature. (Verses 1—3.)

And no good work can any man do, until he first be made good. (Matt. vii. 18.)

Nor can any man of himself, and independent of divine influence, make himself good, and prepare himself to do good. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" Then may he that hath been accustomed to do evil, become capable of doing well.

"If any man therefore is good, and taking any pleasure in doing good, he is God's workmanship." That is to say, God has created him anew. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

And God hath new created us through Christ Jesus, that is, through what he hath suffered for us; his death being the meritorious cause of our salvation.

And through or in dependence on the merit of those sufferings, such a reliance on the death of Christ being the instrumental cause of our redemption.

And this mode of salvation, let it be observed, excludes all boasting. "By grace are ye saved through faith," etc. For of what has that man to boast, whose salvation is devised by the wisdom of another, whose deliverance was effected by the power and goodness of another; and, in short, whose salvation is commenced, continued, and completed, solely through the grace and mercy of God? We hesitate not to say, he has nothing in himself to boast of; but of that grace that originates and finishes his salvation, making him good, and to delight in doing good; in this he may and ought to boast.

A deep sense of his obligation to the grace of God will not permit the saint to do as the heathen, who ascribed their virtue to themselves.

Nor will the christian fail to give the glory of his salvation to the undivided Trinity. (Col. i. 12.)

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Are you living in the constant practice of good works? If not, you are not in a state of salvation; for every real christian is created in Christ Jesus unto good works, God having prepared him to walk in them.

Let your interest in Christ be tried by this test. If you are pardoned, you are purified ; and if purified, you are pardoned.

2. Are you desirous of becoming good ? It is God that has given you that desire ; and, in bestowing that gift on you, has hereby intimated to you what his desire is concerning you ; beg of him therefore to work in you, as he is more ready to hear than you are to pray.

3. Do any of you feel the guilt of past sins resting heavily upon you ? Instantly apply for pardon through Christ Jesus ; your application cannot be in vain.

SKETCH XXIV.

“ Who can understand his errors ? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins ; let them not have dominion over me : then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.” (Psalm xix, 12, 13.)

Who can understand his errors ? Or, as it is rendered in the version of the Psalms which we have in the book of common prayer, who can tell how oft he offendeth ? Were any wishful to know this, how could he attain this knowledge ? For,—

I. We do not know the number of our sins.

Many of our offences were not noticed as sins, at the time they were committed : we but too seldom do that which ought never to be omitted prior to our acting, namely, stop to inquire into the moral quality of our actions.

2. Many of our actions are soon forgotten, or are entirely lost sight of ; like many a debtor, running an account, when it is presented, it turns out to be much larger in amount than he expected ; but though we have forgotten them, they are not blotted from the book of God’s remembrance.

3. We often lose sight of our sins, by losing sight of the principal motive that actuates us, and fixing on another that appears better ; and thus we seem to ourselves to be under a mixture of motives. Besides,—

4. Sins of omission are but too commonly overlooked; as for instance, when we omit to do some good, which we have had it in our power to do, and which therefore we ought to have done; for it is commanded, "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them which are of the household of faith." But who improves all such opportunities? Or who can tell how many such opportunities he has let slip? Or who is it that feels as acutely as he ought on account of such neglect? Or,—

Omitting attention to the call to separate from the world, and to unite with God's people, which leads us to neglect all church duties, and then as perfectly to overlook them, as if they had never been required.

Omitting to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, though as clearly commanded as anything that is commanded there.

Thus it is that we become incapable of numbering our offences. But observe,—

II. These offences are not altered in their nature, because we are unable to number them.

We still are accountable to God for them, whether we can number them or not.

We cannot be unconscious of having committed such, many such, and almost too many to be enumerated.

These are faults still, though secret ones; and they are not so spoken of because they have less of impurity and disobedience in them, and therefore less of opposition, enmity, and disobedience to God in them than other faults.

They are called secret faults in opposition, it may be, to presumptuous sins, which are committed in such a way, and produce such effects, as serve to imprint them more deeply on the memory, and to make it more difficult to lose the impression made on us.

And many of what are called our secret faults might be known, if we would but more carefully examine the Bible and our own hearts, as we ought to do. Our very ignorance therefore is our sin.

And the very worst sinners have the least conscious-

ness of their guilt; have they therefore the least to answer for? O, no!

Ought any therefore to rest in so guilty and perilous a state? Surely not.

But what can any man do? Can he cleanse his own soul? He cannot purge away his guilt.

But he may be purged from it by the blood of Christ. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from all sin."

And as this provision of means, for the purgation of the sinner's conscience, is made by the Son of God, so the use and application of the means, is laid on us, and hence our guilt if we remain unpurged and unforgiven.

Let us therefore instantly and earnestly put up the prayer in our text, "Who can understand his errors?" "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." But let us,—

III. Subjoin or follow up our application for pardoning mercy with fervent supplication for restraining grace for the future, especially that we may be preserved from contracting the guilt of presumptuous sins. "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

Presumptuous sins are sins committed against light and conviction, with deliberation, against remonstrance, and with determination; hence significantly called the great transgression, containing, as it were, the guilt of many sins in one.

And such foul and enormous sins, if in the least indulged, are wont to lord it over a man; no wonder, therefore, that the Psalmist should pray, "Let them not have dominion over me."

The very best saints may be brought under the guilt of presumptuous sins, and are in much danger of being

so, without much vigilance, and even with it, without a special interposition of divine power.

But with such an observance of the enemy, and overshadowing of the divine power, the weakest saint that is, will be omnipotent; no adverse power being able to move him.

To avoid the contraction of fresh guilt, especially that which is attendant on presumptuous sins, and to retain a clear sense of our acceptance with God, should be the aim of all.

And whoever would accomplish this, will find it his best plan to push his religious attainments as far as possible; thus did the Psalmist, saying, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer!"

IMPROVEMENT.

We, as others, have our errors and secret faults, from which we must be cleansed, if we are not so already. But are we?

If this is yet to be done, it ought to be set about immediately, as we know not what opportunities remain to us, or whether any besides the present.

Thank God for this, which is turning to good account to many, and will to us, if well employed.

SKETCH XXV.

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah lv. 6, 7.)

It is the opinion of many, that if the Lord be sought at any time, no matter when, or how, he may be found; but such does not appear to have been the prophet's opinion.

But were we even to grant this to be a true opinion,

yet, even then, it surely will be granted, that the sooner and the more diligently we seek him, the more certain and successful shall we be.

To obtain mercy, we must seek the Lord by prayer, and turn from our wickedness.

I. The Lord must be sought, and that,—

(1.) By prayer. “Call ye upon him.”

Then we cannot cancel guilt by good works, else prayer would be unnecessary. Nor will trusting to an average quantum of virtue be of any service to us, as it is not any such thing that is required of any man in order to his salvation.

“Yea, if we forsake all our wicked ways and self righteous thoughts, yet still must we return unto the Lord, and call upon him,” as in verse 6.

(2.) Pardon must be sought in God’s way.

The Jews sought it by sacrifice, believing it could be had in no other way; and they seemed to have warrant for this sentiment, as it was taught under that economy, that without shedding of blood is no remission.

And are not christians, in fact, taught the same doctrine? Have not they redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins? Is it not said, “That there is none other name under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved?” But,—

(3.) Pardon must be sought in God’s time, “While he may be found; while he is near.” It can only be had during the present life: “Ye shall die in your sins, and where I am, thither ye cannot come.”

And it must be sought early in life, as he is nearest to us during that period of our probation. For,—

As sin is a departure from God, of course, the longer we live in it, the farther we are from him. “They that seek me early shall find me.” If you defer another day, you may be in eternity, and God afar off.

In answer to the prayers of the church, God comes near to the world, and pours out of his Spirit that men may be saved. Thus are we exhorted, “Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when

the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." If ye will not now pray, it may, and probably will be said of you, and to you, "Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for the blessings that were designed for you, tendered to you, and reserved for you so long, are now forever hidden from your eyes. Unhappy men that are in this condition! That it never may be ours, let us,—

II. Proceed to notice what is to be done, that we may escape it; it is requisite,—

1. That the wicked forsake his way; sin must be given up. It signifies not how much we pray, or how much we feel our guilt, if we do not abandon sin, there is no forgiveness for us. "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that he cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

2. It is requisite that our unrighteous thoughts should be forsaken.

As also all thoughts of being forgiven without prayer and conversion.

All desponding thoughts; for if we pray and renounce all sin, he will have mercy. "He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

While in sin, the sinner has a habit of turning his thoughts to sinful subjects; this habit must be broken; set about it therefore immediately. For,—

3. When the terms on which forgiveness is suspended, are scripturally complied with, then is pardon faithfully and uniformly granted; this the text clearly implies. If so, then pardon may be had this moment. Important! most delightful doctrine!

O guilty, and hell deserving sinner, be encouraged to seek, and thou shalt find it!

Here is no delusion, nothing that will deceive or

disappoint. It must then be right to pray, to renounce sin, and in doing this to rely on God, as the promise cannot fail. If we attend but to some of the terms, we shall deceive ourselves, if we expect pardon. If we comply with them all promptly and frankly, God cannot withhold the benefit: "For if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

SKETCH XXVI.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude 20, 21.)

FROM verse 16 to 19, the apostle makes mention of murmurers and complainers, of course against others, not themselves. Separating themselves from the faithful as not good enough to be associated with; and yet these persons were walking after their ungodly lusts, and were grossly sensual, having not the Spirit.

But in opposition to these, the apostle expects the christians of his time, and through them the christians of all other times, to build themselves up against complainers and sowers of dissension and division.

I. On the foundation of their faith.

1. Faith, as a foundation, must refer to the doctrines of the gospel, which settle our views, regulate as well as test our experience, and give unity of feeling, and stability of practice to the church.

This is holy faith; not a faith of a divisive, doubtful, or licentious tendency; but a faith bringing all to one, certifying all of its heavenly origin, and making all most circumspect and holy.

It is most holy faith. All will allow some holiness to be necessary; but many, and perhaps we might say the far greater part of those professing christianity, are unwilling to allow perfection in holiness, to be either necessary or attainable in this present world.

But if the faith or doctrines of christianity are of holy tendency, and of a most holy or hallowing influence, then must perfection in holiness be both attainable and necessary, or the author of the doctrine, and the doctrine itself, are at variance.

2. On this faith, as a basis or foundation, we are to be built. Nothing is to be believed that does not accord with this system of doctrine.

No religious experience is to be accounted genuine that this doctrine has not originated and fostered.

And no practice is to be accounted worthy of the gospel, that is not commanded by its precepts, and countenanced by its examples.

But we are to build ourselves up on this foundation.

The preventing influence of grace must go first, or nothing can be done that God will accept; and without the co-operation of believers themselves, nothing will be done that can, with any reason, be expected to meet the divine approval.

We often find a great difference between the faith and character of those who expect all is to be done for them; and nothing can destroy this difference but either to bring down our faith to our character, which would be unwarrantable, or to bring up our character to our faith, which is to build up ourselves on our doctrines, or to manifest their influence in our tempers, principles, and lives.

3. Praying in the Holy Ghost, is another step to be taken by all those who would render their christian standing firm and constant.

Many are the things included in building ourselves up, among which, prayer is one that is to be accounted all-important.

But we must be careful to pray in the Holy Ghost, that is, we must pray at his suggestion, for his influence, in his language; and in this way shall we,—

4. Keep ourselves in the love of God.

Of this we must be possessed, or our religion will be of nothing worth.

And the best, if not the only proof that we can give

of our having this love, is a uniform and cheerful observance of the commandments of God. "For this is the love of God," (1 John v. 3,) "that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous."

And as an observance of God's commands proves our love to him, so will it minister to its growth and strength; a point which we must ever be labouring to secure. And,—

5. It is only in this way that we can be scripturally looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Eternal life is the gift of undeserved mercy, not the payment of a debt.

And it is the gift of God through and by Jesus Christ. (Rom. vi. 23, and John x. 28.) Thus showing him to be truly and properly a divine person.

And it is this looking for the merciful bestowment of this life that rouses us to build, to pray, and to abound in the labours of love.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. While you attend to these directions, you neither murmur, nor complain, nor separate yourselves from the faithful; on the contrary, you will cleave to them, contribute to their stability, and a joyful anticipation of eternal blessedness.

2. Your hopes shall be most certainly and seasonably realized; of this, your present experience is a glorious pledge.

SKETCH XXVII.

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's; For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." (Romans xiv. 7—9.)

THIS is an account applicable to all christians; it is not a description that may, or may not, be applicable

to christians, according to particular circumstances. Wherever real christianity is at all, there it may be truly said, that such an one liveth not unto himself, etc. And if this be a true account of christians who have any, the least, measure of christianity that is, it must be equally, nay, and much more true, of that christian whose attainments in grace are rare and special. Observe,—

I. What is here said of Christ's relation to all such : "He is the Lord both of the dead and living."

By being Lord, is meant governor and judge. (See verses 11, 12.) He has the right to direct, regulate, dispose of, correct, chasten, and punish, as well as reward, all those who are professedly living in subjection to him. Observe,—

Of whom he is Lord ; of the dead ? "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living ;" that is, God is not the God of such as are dead in the sense of the Sadducees, who held, that the dead are reduced to an unconscious state of being ; all the dead, that is, not only all the pious dead, but all the dead, who are still in a conscious state of being, are under his control and at his disposal. He also is Lord of the living ; of all those who are in the body, and in a state of probation.

Observe, too, he has acquired this right to govern and judge by dying, rising, and reviving, that he might be Lord. This was the condition of the right of transfer of this power to govern and judge to the Son, that he should assume human nature for the purpose of dying, rising, and governing. For the "Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him." For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself ; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. The power delegated to him was for the purpose of a farther manifestation of the divine equity ; not because the Son was more fit to manifest this

farther display of divine equity than the Father, but because he is the Son of Man. Mark, too, the manner in which his relation to us demonstrates his divinity. We live to him; we die to him; we shall be judged by him. If he be not God, we then neither live nor die to God, nor shall we be judged by him. Conferring office, is not conferring qualifications; and none can have qualifications for these offices but a divine person. Observe,—

II. No man liveth to himself; nor yet doth any being but the Lord. The Lord, because his being is underived, and includes all possible perfection, must, and cannot, but live unto himself. No creature can live unto himself, without incurring the guilt of robbery and idolatry.

Much less can any man, however eminent, dignified, or good, live to himself.

We are not so much as at liberty to please ourselves in the choice of a calling, but must aim to please him whose subjects and servants we are.

Nor can this principle admit of any relaxation, however tempting the calling may be.

We are not at liberty so much as to please ourselves in the management of our business; but are to conduct it with a reference to him, and in that way which we think he will best approve; for then only will it be conducted on christian principles.

Objection. But if we are to manage our business thus, how are we to get a living? Do you ask, how you are to get a living? By trusting him, who has commanded you to act thus. Remember, "He is Lord." Remember, too, that he is living to Christ, eminently so, who countenances and promotes those who live and act thus.

Besides, as the christian is the Lord's servant, his fellow christians will respect his conscience, and bear with his weaknesses. (Verses 1—4.) If God has received him, we should. (See chapter xv. 1, 2.)

Our obligation to live unto the Lord, flows from our adoption into his family; he is our heavenly Father,

and we, therefore, are bound to obey and imitate him. But, observe,—

III. No man dieth unto himself, any more than he liveth to himself. “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”

If then, I am the Lord’s, what right have I to part with life, uncalled for? or, what reason can I have to be weary of life, while he, whose I am, prolongs it?

The suicide presents himself before his Lord uncalled for.

The man of pleasure is nearly guilty of the same offence.

Nor is the haggard miser, who starves himself, in any better case.

If, then, the christian man lives and dies unto the Lord, let us see that we are the Lord’s, and then wisely and obediently leave it to him to choose the time and the circumstances of our departure, and dismiss all our anxieties respecting it, assured of his care and support both in life and death.

SKETCH XXVIII.

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Rev. ii. 1—7.)

THIS is the language of Christ, the head of the church, to an angel of the church; that is, to one of its ministers. It was an address to the minister of that part of the church of God which resided in the city of Ephesus.

The Jews had an officer in their synagogues whom they called its angel, whose office was to read, pray, and teach: and analogous to this Jewish officer was the minister of the christian church, whose office it was to conduct its public worship. Now observe,—

I. This epistle respected the church at Ephesus generally, not the minister of it particularly. (See chap. i. 4, 11; and ii. 11.) Timothy was the angel of this church, to whom a considerable part of this address would have been inapplicable, if directed to the angel only, or chiefly. But,—

1. The angel was the person of chief authority in the church, and hence, an address intended for the church generally, was naturally and necessarily directed to its chief officer. And because the minister of a church is possessed of much authority in it, hence he is, to a considerable degree, responsible for its conduct, and

represented as deserving of commendation or blame, as is the church over which he presides.

2. This address to the angel of the church at Ephesus was directed by him who held the seven stars, that is, the angels of the seven churches in lesser Asia, (see verse 20,) or all the angels of the church denoted by a perfect number, as the number seven was ordinarily accounted to be.

These angels or stars Christ then held, and still holds, in his right hand.

(1.) He constitutes them stars. He is the sun, not they; and it is by the light which he gives them that they are enabled to shine to others; and because he sheds on them this light, he requires them to shine to others.

(2.) He holds them in his right hand; he sustains them, as it were, in their different orbits while they shine; protects them from adverse influence and power, as they shine; and guides them where they are to shine; where their light is most needed, and will be most serviceable. Hence,—

(3.) Having shone to others in a way of service on earth, he will cause them to shine with resplendent brightness in the canopy of the triumphant church forever.

And he walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, or churches, observing what light they gave out, and of what use they were in dispelling the darkness that had settled round about them. But observe,—

II. What this epistle to the angel of the church contained; and,—

1. It contained commendation. It commended,—

(1.) Their laborious disposition. “I know thy works, and thy labour.” This church had not been chiefly occupied in professing, boasting, and swelling, but in working and labouring, in producing such fruits, and performing such deeds, as became and were worthy of the church of Christ. It,—

(2.) Commended their patient suffering. The pri-

mitive church was peculiarly exercised by suffering from various quarters, and patience less than inexhaustible, I had almost said, would not have been able to preserve them from total and speedy apostacy.

(3.) It commended their zeal against sin: "This thou hast that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." These Nicolaitanes were the followers of one Nicolas, who held some most abominable sentiments, and cherished some of the most corrupt and destructive practices. These sentiments and practices this church detested and most zealously opposed.

(4.) This church had tested and discarded some who gave themselves out for apostles and were not, but were found liars and deceivers.

In fact, the reiteration of its excellencies in the third verse, is a plain proof of the great excellence found in this church on many points. And yet this epistle contains,—

2. Reproof, conveyed in strong language, for a great fault. It had left its first love; it was not destitute of love; for if it had, there had been no good remaining.

It had light and truth still; it was not unchurched, and therefore continued a candlestick, giving out both light and influence.

But it nevertheless was fallen from that high elevation which it had acquired while under the influence of its first love. The first love of christians is a thing much talked of, but not so much attended to as to its practical results; for if it were, we should have fewer instances of its loss, and more of its increase. It may and ought to be increased; but it is not necessary that it should end, therefore it ought never to be left.

Indeed it cannot be left without much cause of shame, and more of peril. Hence,—

3. This epistle to the angel of the church at Ephesus contains an exhortation: "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works." The works answerable to a saint's first love,

and to a church's first love, which are so just, so good, so generous, so ardent, so unwearied, so true, so faithful ; in short, those works that are so lovely and of such good report.

Nothing but repentance can prevent the farther and total fall of one who has left his first love ; and nothing but the performance of the first works, could shield the fallen subject from punitive visitation. For,—

4. The epistle to this angel of the church at Ephesus contains a threat, "Repent," etc., "or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." This removal of the candlestick, means the abandonment of the church to further loss and utter ruin ; and he threatens to do this quickly or soon, unless immediate repentance and reformation should prevent the evil. But,—

5. That the epistle might be perfect, and leave no passion unassailed, that could contribute to the reformation and amendment of this church's state, the hope of the church is encouraged ; for to him that setteth himself instantly and in good earnest to recover himself from his lapsed state, nobly struggling to surmount the difficulties that always strew the path of reformation, to him is the promise made of eating of the tree of life, which is the pledge of immortality and heaven.

Whether, therefore, we consider this epistle as directed to the church at Ephesus, or to its angel, it still embraces the interests of every individual saint ; for first love in no case can be left but with disgrace and peril. And,—

If we never had what is so significantly called our first love, our religion is not, and never was worth anything.

Let us see then, if we ever had any such thing as true religion.

Let us see if we have as much as we ever had ; if not, we know what we have to do.

Let us see that we have more than we had at first, and as much as we may have.

SKETCH XXIX.

"And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me : And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand." (Samuel xxv. 32, 33.)

It is said, "Better is he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city." Here we have a good comment on this saying. For David so far acknowledgeth the strength of his passion in the case before us, as plainly to show, that but for Abigail's interposition to check his passion in its fierce career, he had fallen into the commission of the greatest evils. And David's case was not peculiar; for every subject of ungovernable passion is liable to the commission of some great evil, being borne along in the same headlong course. Now observe,—

I. The condition of the sinner under the influence of passion.

He is proceeding with an accelerated motion in a headlong course to perdition; for,—

1. Reason does not restrain the subject, when passion is raised; (see text;) on the contrary, it is enlisted, in the first instance, on the side of passion. "I do well to be angry," even unto death, said Jonah. And Naaman, the Syrian, furnishes another instance of this kind; who, when Elisha said, by his messenger, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean, was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought," etc., and went away in a rage. And after awhile, reason will be content to follow in the train of passion. While desire lasts, we seek for reasons to gratify it; but when cool, we can judge impartially.

2. Nor yet his will, though free.

The will could restrain the passions were it so disposed, or we should have nothing to distinguish us from brutes or devils.

But until the will is renewed, when, and so long as, desire craves, the will is more free to gratify it; indeed nothing gives so much pleasure as the gratification of desire. And,—

3. That propensity to evil which is natural to man prepares him to go onward.

External temptations propel him in the same direction.

The first is the tide carrying him along on its bosom; the latter, the wind that fills his sails, and thus drives him along. And having wind and tide, the vessel sails fast.

In this condition are we found by the Holy Ghost, when he undertakes to renew and save us. Were we left to ourselves, we should quickly be a perfect wreck. But observe,—

II. Every such interposition must, of necessity, originate in the abundant mercy of God, for when first found of grace we were,—

1. In a most pitiable condition, though unpitied and forlorn. (See Ezek. xvi. 3—6.)

We not only deserved to perish, and were liable to do so, but actually were in a perishing condition. For,—

2. If we had anything of conscience left, and if at anytime it gave us any check, it was entirely owing to the Spirit of God, that enlightened and awakened it at the time. And if,—

3. Any fellow-creature was induced to reprove us, and expostulate with us, on account of our course and daring, it was by God's gracious providence that it was so ordered. As it was in David's case, (see text,) so it was in ours. Observe,—

III. That men who thus deliberately sin, are in great and even imminent danger of perishing. For,—

1. Every sin deliberately committed has a fearful tendency to harden and cauterize the conscience; in which case every subsequent sin is less and less offensive, until all that can give alarm has vanished, and sin bewitches and carries captive. Besides,—

2. Every sin deliberately committed, awfully adds to the strength of our propensity to evil, so much so, that though the sinner sees the precipice right before him, and himself just upon it, yet he must go on, he cannot stop himself. And if,—

3. By some miracle of mercy the sinner should be arrested in his downward course, he finds that it is not always in the sinner's power to repent. He finds that a soft and yielding heart is not always at his command; it neither comes from the east nor from the west, but from the Lord. Whence observe,—

IV. The mercy of a preventing process.

1. To prevent, is greater than to pardon. The pardon of numerous and provoking crimes, implies much patience, great forbearance, and abundant mercy.

But the prevention of such sin furnishes a richer display of the divine excellence and glory, as well as secures a greater sum of good to man. Besides,—

2. A preventing process permits not the contraction of bad and ruinous habits: what a mercy then to commence such a course at the earliest period! not half the conflicts are afterwards experienced.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. It is a much greater pleasure to forbear than to commit sin. We have this exemplified in David's case. The pleasure of sin is but momentary, followed by lasting remorse. The pleasure of forbearing it is great and lasting.

2. The dispositions of the mind are made manifest to ourselves by reflection. Prevention of sin leads to the indulgence of malice in the wicked, to thankfulness in the just.

3. God sometimes prevents sin by merciful judgments. He permits if not appoints affliction, poverty, etc., to overtake his creatures, thereby taking away their means of sinful gratification, and furnishing them with an opportunity and a motive to reflection, humiliation, etc., etc. But,—

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4. It is the gospel that is the great instrument of a permanent prevention of sin, by bringing about our salvation.

SKETCH XXX.

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” (Acts xxvi. 18.)

THESE words form part of Paul's commission to preach unto the Gentiles, which Christ gave unto him when he arrested and converted him, as he was proceeding to Damascus to persecute the church of Christ. Being exceedingly mad against the disciples of the Saviour, and thinking that he did God service in punishing them, he was not content to follow this cruel trade at home, but he must seek authority from the chief priests and rulers to go abroad in quest of these innocents, and bring them bound to Jerusalem. Who would have imagined that this man would ever, and especially so soon, be sent to open the blind eyes of others, his own so fearfully closed? And yet, behold the thing!

No sooner had he asked, on hearing himself called and charged with being a persecutor, Who art thou Lord? than he was answered, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest; but rise, and stand upon thy feet; as if he had said, be not afraid, for although thou deservest to be punished for the spirit thou hast indulged, I have no other object in appearing to thee thus, than to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may, etc.

Let us consider the several parts of this commission of Paul to the people and to the Gentiles.

1. He sent him to the people of his own nation ; his commission was to preach Jesus. (See 1 Cor. i. 17.) And as he was sent on this errand, he appears to have considered himself bound, wherever he came, to make his first offer of the gospel to the Jews ; but, when they slighted and despised it, he, having received a special call to preach it to the Gentiles, never failed to do this, and even gloried in his call to do this. (See Acts xiii. 46, 47.) Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you ; but, seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn unto the Gentiles ; for so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have sent thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation to the ends of the earth. And again, " I speak unto you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." (Rom. xi. 13.)

Having received such a commission, he lived in the spirit of it ; (see Romans i. 9;) and accounted himself a debtor to all to whom he had an opportunity of carrying it. (Romans i. 14.) And hence he held himself in readiness to go and preach wherever an opening was made for him. (Romans i. 15.) But what was he sent to the people and to the Gentiles to do ? Do ? Why,—

2. " To open their eyes."

This is not to be understood literally ; for their bodily eyes were not closed ; but their understandings, which are the mind's eye, were closed to the things of God ; of these things they were ignorant.

The Jews, who had the best means of knowing these things, even they were ignorant of God's righteousness, went about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting to the righteousness of God. (Rom. x. 3.)

What then could be expected of the Gentiles, who had been left in and to times of peculiar ignorance ? (Acts xvii. 30.)

The apostle could emphatically say of their wisest men, " Ye were sometimes darkness." They paid no

regard to religion, having pleasure in studying any other subject, rather than this. It was then as it is now. He was sent,—

3. “To turn them from darkness to light.”

Our rationalists, our deists, nay, and our socialists and atheists, pretend to much light; but what do they know of God, apart from the light of revelation? He was to the polished Greeks, the unknown God; and their polytheism and idolatry were a sufficient proof of their ignorance of God.

They knew not his nature, that he is a Spirit, a Spirit of light, a Spirit of love.

They knew not whether forgiveness could be had, or how it was to be attained.

They were ignorant of the way in which man's nature is to be purified; nay, they did not so much as know whether it could be purified or not.

And as to the doctrine of a resurrection from the dead, a day of judgment, and a future state, of these things they were in total darkness, except as they gathered a few rays on these subjects from their connexion with the people of God.

But the gospel brought meridian light to men on all these points; hence its ministers, the least of its ministers, much more its ablest, invariably turned those to whom they ministered from darkness to light. And,—

4. They turned them from the power of satan to God.

Our deists, yea, and our rational christians too, affirm that there is no devil.

And, if their views and belief on this subject are right, our Lord had neither reason nor honesty in him.

But many of these gentlemen, at the very time they deny the existence of the devil, play the devil, not only to the brute creation, but to their fellowmen.

And, if their power and disposition to do evil is such, what then must be the malevolence and power of the fallen angels?

And in their being, power, and disposition to do

evil, we must believe, if we are to believe the word of God.

He exerts a power over the mind : having blinded the minds of them which believe not, he exerts a fearful power over the will. "They are led captive by the devil at his will."

Hence, the ministration of the gospel is intended to turn men from the thralldom and tyranny of satan to God ; that is, to union and fellowship with him, and particularly to his service and glory. And this is sought,—

4. With a view to bring them to the enjoyment of forgiveness of sins.

This is, according to some, unattainable in this world ; or, if at all attainable, only just before we die.

But so thought not the apostle ; so said not Jesus Christ.

He sent Paul to conduct all who sought it, to the present possession of it ; and not only to the possession of forgiveness, but,—

5. To inheritance among them that are sanctified.

The sanctified are those who are purified from all sin ; not from some only, like a wild man in a cage, but from all, so as to be rendered harmless and blameless, the children of God, unrebukeable in their generation.

They are wholly set apart, and are indeed devoted to God.

To have inheritance among these, is to be made one of them, like a man who has a place in a corps of soldiers.

These inherit the privileges and blessings of the gospel here, and the kingdom of heaven hereafter. " Begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to the hope of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you," etc. This inheritance is,—

6. Had by faith in Christ.

It is by faith in his blood we are pardoned.

It is by faith in his power we are sanctified.

It is by faith in his promise of continual aid that we are kept to eternal life.

IMPROVEMENT.

This ministry has come to us, what have been its effects?

Our eyes were closed, has it opened them?

We were darkness, are we turned from it, and to a state of light?

We were under the power of satan, are we turned from his power to God?

We were under condemnation, are we now partakers of forgiveness?

We were under the most dreadful forfeiture, are we now partakers of this inheritance among the sanctified?

SKETCH XXXI.

“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matt. xviii. 18.)

NEVER was invention more fruitful, or zeal more active, in seeking for arguments to support any construction put upon God’s holy word, than what the Romish church has manifested in endeavouring to support that sense which she has given to this scripture. She has interpreted the text wholly of Peter and of his successors in the bishopric of Rome. So that these words, though addressed to all the apostles, and if to any others, to the successors of them all, as the teachers relate to no other church than that of Rome.

But against this construction of the passage this argument lies, if there were no other: “This is a meaning put upon the passage by the few, in opposition to the many; and it is a meaning which was not given to the passage by any for the first six hundred years of the christian era. This simple fact is quite sufficient to sap the foundation of the fabric which the church of Rome has erected on this comment on the words. For as Bishop Taylor judiciously remarks, that which was not in the beginning, cannot be in the descent, unless innovated and introduced by a new authority. Christ

gave ordinary power to none but the apostles ; and the power being to continue forever in the church, it was to be succeeded to ; and by the same authority, even Christ, it descended to them who were their successors, that is, to the bishops, as all antiquity does consent and teach : not to Peter alone, but every apostle, and therefore everyone who succeeds them."

In opposition, then, to this fanciful, corrupt, and mischievous construction of the passage, let me give you that sense of it which has ever been considered as the true one. It is a cheering declaration delivered to the apostles by our Lord, assuring them of the approval and confirmation of their disciplinary acts in that government of the church so long, and so far as they were regulated by the directions he had given them. Where observe,—

1. The case of discipline here referred to: "Moreover," (see verse 15, etc.,) "If thy brother shall trespass against thee," etc. Here we see how an offending brother is to be treated ; and from such treatment of him we are not at liberty to depart ; and, adhering to it, we have a right to look for approval and confirmation of our procedure. Such will be the case with all those to whom the right of admission into, or exclusion from, the church belongs.

Nor will the case be materially altered if cases of offence be thus treated by private members of the church, though no other disciplinary acts follow. Observe,—

2. This power, according to Matthew xvi. 19, was first given to Peter, in connexion with the exercise of his ministry, and appears to have been given him as spokesman of all the apostles, to indicate his and their fitness to be entrusted with such power, in consequence of the discoveries made to them, and the teaching they had received. Observe,—

3. The scriptures already alluded to are of the same meaning with John xx. 23, as illustrated by 1 Corinthians v. 4, 5 ; and 2 Corinthians ii. 6—10. By remitting or retaining sins is meant, either declaring on

what terms men's sins are remitted or retained ; or, by disciplinary acts, treating them as pardoned persons, or as transgressors. Observe,—

4. This power must be exercised in accordance with the directions of the divine word, or it will have no countenance from the Lord.

Most fearfully has this power been abused in the Romish church for the last 1,600 years.

And little less has been its abuse in other churches affecting to be much more pure and apostloical.

And the purest churches we have, but too often have departed from that treatment of offenders so pointedly and positively enjoined in holy writ. Observe,—

5. This power of remitting or of retaining sins, has, from the beginning, been derived from Christ, not from the people. How could such power originate with the people ? It was not for them to declare the terms of remission, or the contrary, who knew them not until revealed. Much less was it for them to say what disciplinary acts or measures would have the sanction of Heaven, until the divine will was made known.

And as such power could not originate with the people, we cannot believe that it is vested in them, unless the time, the place, and the circumstances under which the investment was made, can be shown to us. Observe,—

6. The exercise of this power, in its more formal and extreme acts, is put forth by the ministers of Christ, in conjunction with the church. (See verses 16, 17 ; also 1 Cor. v. 4, and 2 Cor. ii. 5—11.)

In no section of the church, that hath acquired any thing like a settled and scriptural form, will this power be put forth by the ministers alone ; as its exercise calls for all the solemnity and weight that the church of God can give it, to render it productive of good to the offender. Observe,—

7. That when any one is bound with these disciplinary cords, or his sins are retained, God will bind him in heaven ; and no earthly power, but that which

bound him, can loose him again. Yet, let it never be forgotten, that no secular power whatever, is connected with this high authority; for neither Matthew xvi. 19, nor Matthew xviii. 18, nor John xx. 23, make the least reference to any such power, or can admit of it. The first of them relates to the christian ministry, and particularly to the gift of the keys to Peter, who was to unlock and open the gospel dispensation to the Jews on the day of pentecost, and to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. So that to bind and to loose, is to be taken ministerially for proposing the terms of pardon on the part of God.

The second passage relates to the commission of trespass, not against God, but against man.

Such offence the christian is to forgive, if the sinner apologize for his offence. This is evident from Peter's inquiry, How oft, he asks, shall my brother trespass against me, and I forgive him? He does not ask, how oft shall my brother trespass against God, and I forgive him? He never pretended to do any such thing as that.

So in the application of the simile to Peter's case. (See last verse.) It is the obligation of one brother to forgive another. (See also the Lord's prayer.)

The last passage simply relates to the exercise of that power which is given to the ministers of Christ to proclaim the terms of pardon, and to treat as pardoned, or the contrary, those who evidently accept or reject them.

Perhaps we shall be justified in saying, that in all the three texts, binding and loosing relates to disciplinary acts on offenders, for offences either against private members, or against the church, by occasioning scandal.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. How unwilling are many to acknowledge their faults. The consequence of their obstinacy is, they are cast out of the church. When this is done, they comfort themselves with the thought, "They cannot

turn me out of heaven." No, they cannot; for you will never be permitted to enter there, unless you humble yourselves.

2. Those who have been expelled the church lawfully, may go amongst other sects, but the bond will remain on them.

3. Those who have left and scandalised a society, must come back to the church by repentance; there being no other way into the church and into heaven.

4. Let the saints take heed to themselves, and let them remember that Christ did not persecute heathens and publicans.

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